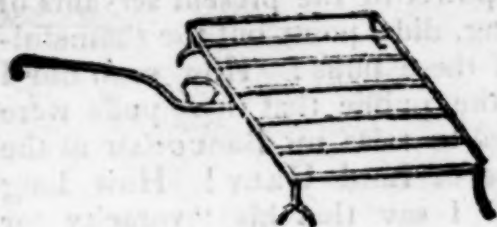


COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

Vol. 79.—No. 1.]

LONDON, SATURDAY, JANUARY 5TH, 1833.

[Price 1s. 2d.]



DOUBLE-DEALING.

FOR some time past, there has been a rumour about divisions in what they call "*the Cabinet*." We shall, I hope, soon leave off the use of this slang term; this piece of impudent pretension to a distinct power in the state; we shall, I hope, soon learn to call the persons composing this thing, *the servants of the King*, as our fathers called them, and as they really are; and that we shall consider them as nothing more than his servants, exercising severally the powers which he lodges in their hands, and answerable, strictly answerable, legally as well as morally, for the manner in which they exercise those powers. Let us hope that we shall get into this train very soon; and that our conduct will teach the people to be looking to their own House of Parliament, to see what it is doing and what it intends to do; that they will be placing their confidence in that House; that they will discover very soon that it is there where they are "to live, or have no life;" and that they will care much about as much for "*squabbles in the Cabinet*" as men care for the fighting of two dogs for a bone, they not being the owners of the dogs. These people are the servants of the King, and they are paid by the people, to whom they are responsible for the manner of performing their services; and they are so to be made responsible by those whom the people intrust with the management, or carrying on, of their part of the Government. The persons thus intrusted by the people are the members of the House of Commons,

who, if they be not amongst the basest of all mankind; if they be not at once pusillanimous and false to their trusts, will always consider these servants of the King as persons responsible to them, and, of course, in such their capacity of servants, as entitled to a less degree of respect than those who constitute the three branches of the Government; namely, the King, the Lords, and the Commons. While, indeed, the House of Commons was composed, not of representatives of the people, but of the nominees, or agents, or servants, of peers or other great men; while, in the language of the petition of Lord Grey, presented in the month of May, 1793, a majority of the whole House of Commons was returned by about one hundred peers, and great commoners, and by the Lords of the Treasury; while the House of Commons was thus composed, it might be well enough; it might be perfectly in character for the King to consider the whole House as proper to be placed at the command of his servants; but, now that the House is to be composed of representatives of the people, let us hope that the members will have the spirit not to wait like a parcel of menials to be told by the King's servants when they are to separate, when they are to meet again, and what they are to do. So powerful is habit, however, that the mercenary newspapers now give us as a piece of news, that it is "*settled*" that the late Speaker is again to be Speaker! Settled by "*the Cabinet*," I suppose; who know, of course, what they intend, what they wish; and, I dare say, think that their wishes are to be implicitly obeyed by the House, just as they heretofore have been. I trust, however, that the Cabinet will discover its mistake; that it will find out the difference between a House of representatives, and a House of nominees or agents; and that the people themselves will very soon perceive that the miauling of two cats upon the roof of the house in the night-

time; that the caterwauling of a couple of these noisy devils, is of infinitely greater importance to a well-regulated family, than what is now put forth as the important "*division in the Cabinet*."

These "divisions," however, though of no earthly importance to the people; though not at all affecting their interests; may sometimes be amusing; and, in this respect, those divisions which are now said to be likely to take place, are worthy of attention, particularly as they seem to show the people that it is happy for them that they have got *some* representatives at last, and that they are no longer to consider themselves at the mercy of a set of servants of the King, whose intreguing, whose want of principle, whose silliness and whose wildness are so strongly portrayed in the publications put forth relative to the alleged divisions. Amongst these publications, I shall take one from the *Morning Chronicle* of this day (3. January). I shall bestow no comment upon it, other than this, that it clearly shows that the two factions still think that there is nobody but themselves who will have any right in managing the affairs of the country; that they look upon the House of Commons which is about to be assembled, as nothing more than a mere thing to be played upon; that it will be a mere instrument in the hands of one faction or of the other, and that the only thing to be thought of is, which of the factions shall get it into its hands; that the newspaper people, the "race that write," have exactly the same idea of the coming House of Commons; and that none of them have the smallest idea that there will be any body of persons in the House of Commons worthy of attention, who will not be a mere tool in the hands of one or the other of these factions. I will just observe further, that, what the *Chronicle* here says of STANLEY and of BROUGHAM, is merely a repetition of what I have said of both of them long and long ago, to which may be added that the *Chronicle* has always done its best to controvert my opinions regarding these men, and to render the promulgation of them un-

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The eulogies recently bestowed in the Tory reviews, magazines, and newspapers, on Lord Brougham and Mr. Stanley, and the endeavour to hold them up as opposed to their colleagues, and falling back towards Toryism, is very well as a party manoeuvre. Mr. Stanley is young and hot-headed, and can afford to do foolish things; but the Lord Chancellor is old enough to know that the loss of reputation would to him be the loss of every thing. At the same time, there is in this endeavour to ruin his Lordship by praises, enough to lead him to suspect that he has drawn all this on himself by his own conduct. We do not, we cannot suspect his Lordship of any treason to, or desertion of, his friends. How is it, then, that his Lordship has drawn on himself this calumny? Lord Brougham has expressed more democratical opinions than ever Earl Grey expressed. Lord Brougham has been far more hated by the church than Earl Grey. In the organ of the clergy, *John Bull*, Lord Brougham has been constantly reviled, and hard, coarse nicknames applied to him. In that journal, again and again, designs to overthrow the constitution and church of England have been attributed to his Lordship. In the last number but one he was even termed insane. Lord Brougham was the great patron of the London University, the special object of the hatred of the clergy, and it is even said that he was the special cause of the enormous outlay in brick and mortar which has so much crippled its resources, in order to mortify the persons by the eye-sore of so magnificent a structure. Earl Grey never showed a partiality to the London University—Earl Grey never was particularly an object of aversion to the clergy—Earl Grey never was supposed to have any partiality for Dissenters. But no one for a moment ever threw out even a suspicion that Earl Grey had any disposition to abandon his colleagues for the sake of proving his attachment to the church. But Lord Brougham, having such an immense arrear of obloquy poured on him by the church and its organs undischarged, is, one should have thought, the very last man to whom the suspicion of making common cause with the high church party against his colleagues would attach. The suspicion, however, has been thrown out, and we think it may be traced to a cause connected with the peculiar character of his Lordship. He is known to have a liking for the policy of managing opponents; and it almost always happens, that when a man thinks he is dexterous enough in manoeuvring an enemy, that enemy takes it into his head he is manoeuvring him. It is one of his Lordships tactics to suppose, that as he is sure of those of his own side, every favour bestowed on an opponent will neutralize opposition, and convert it into attachment. Hence his endeavour to gain over the Duke of Wellington by a good appointment to his relative; hence his endeavour to gain the good will of the bishops by his speech about the partner-

ship between the church and the landholders respecting tithes; hence the absurd renouncing to the bishops, the deadliest enemies of reform, of the patronage of all livings under 200*l.* a year, which proved such an obstacle in the elections, and which did not diminish the disposition of the bishops to trip up the heels of Ministers. With respect to this subject, we find the following very important statement regarding it in Mr. Stephenson's letter to Lord Henley, just published, which we shall notice at more length on a future day.

"There is (he says) a subject touched upon by both reviews which ought not now to be passed unnoticed. The observation in *The Edinburgh Review*, in favour of William the Third, having left the disposal of the church patronage of the Crown to his queen, who acted therein according to Tillotson's advice, and that, after her death, having left it to a commission of the archbishops and four bishops, is made on the ground of the King's ignorance of the characters of English churchmen. The observation in the *Quarterly* is highly laudatory of the present Lord Chancellor, for that he placed the patronage of all his livings below the value of 200*l.* per annum, at the disposal of the bishops in their respective dioceses. Probably you may know, that a letter was signed by more than one hundred members of the last House of Commons, addressed and given personally to the present Lord Chancellor Brougham, in which, for the reasons assigned, his Lordship was requested to recall that act."

These are the causes of the insidious praises bestowed on his Lordship by the bitterest enemies of the administration. It is a bye-word, that if any favour be to be shown in any of the departments over which his Lordship has any influence, any man who has all his life been a bitter enemy to the Whigs, and is so still, has a much better chance of obtaining, it than another who clung to them from principle, and fought for the cause when it was under a shade. It is notorious, for instance, that in Scotland, over which his Lordship from his knowledge must have influence, the appointments have in many cases been most offensive to the old Whigs. We have an instance of this so late as the Edinburgh election, pointed out by the *Scotsman* in the number of December 19.

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"to pass over his claims, and give it to Dr. Craigie, who has shown his gratitude for the preference, by going early yesterday morning and giving a plumper for Mr. Blair! We happen to know the fact, from being in the booth in George-square at the moment when Dr. C. was manifesting the delicacy of his political feelings by the act in question! After this, who will deny the impartiality of the present Ministers?"

We could tell *many a strange story* of the singular felicity of oblivion which has been displayed towards deserving individuals of the northern part of the island, but it would do no good.

It is always an alarming symptom when a man is praised by his enemies. We are far from entertaining a suspicion for one moment that his Lordship ever had any other *than the very best ends in view*. But it is not enough that a man's ends be good, he should go a straight road towards them. The praise just now bestowed on his Lordship will soon, we know, be followed by bitter invectives, when it is found that his Lordship *does not mean to desert the cause of the people*. That he cannot and will not we are as certain as we are of our existence. In fact, what on earth could be a substitute to his Lordship for *the hold which he has on the affections of the nation*. Were he saturated with wealth and splendour, these could not satisfy him. He could not live a year without public approbation. He must live and move in the public regard and public sympathy. We have no doubts—never had any—[Something is omitted here.] We attribute all that has happened to an infirmity of disposition which renders him dissatisfied with less than the golden opinions of all sorts of men—a sort of voracity of fame.

His Lordship will assuredly disappoint the Tories; and then their fire will be opened against him, of which something like a threat is held out in the following passage, from an article in the *Standard* of yesterday, in answer to another article in the *Times*:

"Fortunately, however, it so happens that we need not appeal to any private information for proof of the existence of a division in the Cabinet, and of a division, too, which must either rend it asunder, or spare it at the cost of utterly ruining the one section or the other.—Lord Brougham and Mr. Stanley (we like to associate them, for they are, we believe, the only two honourable men of the Cabinet, as they are unquestionably the only two able men)—Lord Brougham and Mr. Stanley have made no secret of their views either on the question of the ballot or on the question of the church plunder. The noble Lord has distinctly and very emphatically called the first 'a contrivance to make a man's whole life a lie;' and the other, 'a robbery of the tenth joint tenant by his nine co-tenants.' Mr. Stanley, though less sententiously, has avowed the same views as eloquently and as explicitly. We know, therefore, that Lord Brougham and

Mr. Stanley are absolutely pledged *against* the ballot, and *against* church plunder. Now we are as little in the dark with respect to the views of Lord Durham, Lord John Russell, Lord Althorp, and Mr. Poulett Thomson. They are pledged to support the ballot *upon certain conditions*, and they are *absolutely* committed to the support of any scheme of church plunder that may be produced. As to the Lords Goderich and Palmerston, Mr. Charles Grant, and the other *omnibus* Statesmen, nobody, we suppose, ever dreamed of asking them what they mean to do, as everybody knows that they will do that thing, whatever it is, that promises to keep them in place.—Here, then, is a complete and apparently irreconcilable division between all the effective members of the cabinet—between all who have any opinion of their own; a schism not upon any question of mere speculation or trifling import, but a schism upon two questions of pressing practical interest, and of the very greatest magnitude. What is to be done with these questions? they will be brought forward early in the session, and how will the Ministers deal with them? 'A divided Cabinet,' says the *Times*, no doubt, 'as on the Catholic question, will solve the difficulty.' The precedent is auspicious, we must allow, but, unluckily, Lord Brougham cannot avail himself of it; he has said too much of divided Cabinets, of 'black keys and white keys,' ever to sit in one without infamy. Well, then, 'one of the parties must back out.' We suspect, however, that Lord Brougham is not likely to be the party."

This is all very *curious*; very amusing; but of no real interest to the people, if the House of Commons be composed of any but very treacherous and despicable men. Nevertheless one cannot help observing on the way that the thing is working. Both factions see clearly, that, in spite of all their efforts in the elections, they must unite against that body of men which will be found in the House devoted to the interests of the people; or that (and mark this) such changes must take place as will produce cheap Government, and cheap Government, this cheap Government is really and truly a breaking up of both the factions, and of so large a part of the aristocracy that it must be quite terrific for them to think of. But, for the factions to *unite*, is no easy matter. They will not unite, they cannot unite, without getting rid of Lord GREY: the court, the high and indignant aristocracy, the church, are all afraid of him. Besides,

it is he that has been the doer of the deed ; and he, on his part, cannot be at the head of such union without covering himself with everlasting infamy. He has done that for which he will never be forgiven by the other faction, and by all that description of beings who prey upon the people. He cannot be at the head of such a union. Therefore the factions are looking out for a man to be at the head of it who yet shall have popularity ; and they think that they have such a man in BROUGHAM, and a good back for him in STANLEY. Whatever else they may think of the coming House of Commons, they know well that there will be men in it to propose a *cheap Government*, which is a phrase that must become the distinctive appellation of the part of the House here alluded to. Both factions will detest the cheap-government men ; and yet, without a union, they will not be able to oppose them for a day ; and hence the desire for a union ; and hence the plain overtures of the Tories to place BROUGHAM, backed by STANLEY, at the head of this union ; and, I think it very likely, and I most assuredly wish it, that Lord GREY may see his danger soon enough ; and may resolve, at once, and adhere to the resolution, to place himself at the head of the cheap-government men, and lay his foes prostrate at his feet. Thirty years ago I began to tell him, and I have been telling it him ever since, that, with the people at his back, he would be everything, and that, without them at his back, he would be nothing. The just and reasonable demands of the people will soon be made known to him : let him listen patiently to those demands : let him only tell the people that they shall have a patient hearing ; let him convince them, that he is ready to do every thing that can be done for them consistent with the extent of his power, and with the preservation of the ancient constitution of the country ; let him convince the people of this, and they will be patient ; and let him and the Parliament be just, and the people patient, and his name will become the greatest that the world has heard of for

centuries. If he take the contrary course ; if he treat the complaints of the people with contumely or with neglect, he will soon find that his enemies will profit from the unpopularity and hatred which will soon attach themselves to him ; and that, as his renown might have been the greatest of which man can form an idea, so his disgrace will be great in proportion.

SCOTLAND.

IN fulfilment of my promise to my London readers, I have now placed in my shop, at Bolt-Court, an ASSORTMENT OF APPLES which were grown on the beautiful banks of the CLYDE, which, the reader will please to observe, is nearly about the centre of Scotland. These APPLES were all grown in the orchard of Mr. HAMILTON of DALZELL ; and, though they have been at Glasgow, at sea, and lying in London unpacked (all put together) ever since the *first of November*, I think they could now challenge *Covent-garden* ! I shall let these apples remain in my shop for eight or ten days, or more : and I have also placed there a DUNLOP-CHEESE, *Dunlop* being a village in Ayrshire, famous for the making of cheese ; and, I have no scruple to say, that this cheese, which is about *half-a-hundred weight*, is, pound for pound, equal in quality to any cheese from Cheshire, Gloucestershire, or Wiltshire. There is nothing like seeing things with *our own eyes*. I cannot bring up *Scotland itself*, and exhibit it at Bolt-court, but I can exhibit these indubitable proofs of the goodness and productiveness of the soil of that country ; and, of the virtue and sense of its *people* I have, in my *Tour*, put upon record proofs enough.

As I have, in different numbers of the *Register*, inserted the greater part of this *Tour* ; I now insert the following : the Title, Dedication, and Preface, to the Volume, which will be published on *Thursday next*, the 10. instant. And thus I shall, as far as I am able, have done justice to a

country and a people, who have been more, and more unjustly, misrepresented than any country and people upon the face of the earth.

Cobbett's Tour in Scotland; and in the four northern Counties of England: in the Autumn of the Year 1832. By William Cobbett, M.P. for Oldham.

DEDICATION.

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE BOROUGH OF OLDHAM IN LANCASHIRE.

MY FRIENDS,—I beg you to receive this little book, the first that I have published since you did me the honour to choose me one of your representatives in the House of Commons; I beg you to accept of it, as a mark of the sincerity of my gratitude towards you, as a mark of my admiration of your sense and of your public virtue; and, moreover, I beg you to accept of it, as containing a record of the patriotic sentiments of the people of Scotland, and of the approbation which they, beforehand, gave to that choice which you have made. The old and sound maxim, with all oppressors, is, "*Divide and oppress*;" and, the oppressions which this kingdom (formerly three kingdoms) has so long had to endure, have, in a great measure, arisen from the means which have been found to act upon that crafty and malignant maxim. These means have been afforded by the *prejudices*; by the innumerable *falsehoods* (many of which have become proverbs), which have been sedulously propagated and perpetuated by those who found their own interest in the oppressing of us. To be powerful and free; to be able to beat down all oppressors beneath our feet, *cordial union* amongst us all is the only thing wanted; but, to secure that happy union, we must first *know one another well*; and, that you may well know our brethren of Scotland; that you may well know what they and their country are; that the latter is by no means that which we have hitherto thought it to be; and that they themselves are worthy of our

highest esteem, and our warmest affection, the following pages are sent forth to the world, and are addressed in a more particular manner to you, by

Your faithful friend,

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

London, 28. Dec. 1832.

PREFACE.

The publication of this Tour has been put off longer than I could have wished. I intended to put it to the press immediately on my return from Scotland to London, which return took place on the 23. November; but, upon my arrival in London, I found, that the Parliament would be dissolved in a week or ten days from that time; that I must be compelled to go back to Lancashire at that time; and I found so much business upon my hands, during the short space between my return to London and the day of the dissolution of Parliament, that it would be impossible for me to find time even for the writing of this short preface, and for attending to the sheets of the work as they went through the press.

With regard to THE MATTER contained in this little book, it consists, as the reader is already apprised, of a record of my observations, made during the Tour described in the title-page; and also a record of transactions, rather of a political nature, in which I myself was a principal actor. I have inserted the divers parts, according to the date of the place and time, at which, and when, they were first written. In giving an account of the reception which I met with on my Tour, I have thought, that justice to myself as well as to my friends required, that I should preserve the several addresses presented to me, without leaving out even the names which were signed to them. There can be no doubt that every one who signed any one of these addresses will be pleased to see his name thus recorded, more especially as he thus put down his name before the event which has lately taken place at OLDHAM.

In some few instances I have made

small alterations, of a verbal nature, and here and there I have enlarged my observations and statements of facts; but, generally speaking, I have not found it necessary to make alterations or additions in the part which was already written. I have made what I deem a very interesting addition relative to the resources of the *Highlands* of Scotland, and their comparative value with some parts of England; and this addition seemed to me to be necessary, in order to give my readers something like correct notions with regard to that part of the kingdom which has always been so greatly undervalued, not only by Englishmen, but by all the rest of the world.

The motives to the making of this publication, are, to communicate to everybody, as far as I am able, correct notions relative to Scotland; its soil; its products; its state, as to the well-being or ill-being of the people; but, above all things, it is my desire, to assist in doing justice to the character, political as well as moral, public as well as private, national as well as social, of our brethren in that very much misrepresented part of the kingdom. This is a duty particularly incumbent upon me; for, though I never have carried my notions of the sterility and worthlessness of Scotland, and of the niggardly character of its inhabitants, to the extent which many others have; though I have, in reprobating the conduct of the "*booming*" *pro-consular* *feelosofers*, always made them an exception to the *people* of Scotland; though I have always done this, still, I could not prevent myself from imbibing, in some degree, the prejudices, which a long train of causes, beginning to operate nearly a thousand years ago, have implanted in minds of Englishmen; though I had intimately known, for many years, such great numbers of Scotchmen, for whom I had the greatest regards, still the prejudices, the false notions, lay lurking in my mind; and in spite of my desire always to do justice towards everybody, the injustice would slip out, even without my perceiving it. In any other man it would

have been of some importance that these erroneous notions should be corrected; but, in me, whose writings, I might fairly presume, extended to every part of the civilized world, it became of very great importance; and it became my bounden duty to do that justice, which I have endeavoured to do in the following pages; and to make, by a true statement of facts, derived from ocular proof, that atonement for past errors, which I have in these pages endeavoured to make.

From how many pairs of lips have I heard the exclamation: "Good God! who would have thought that Scotland was such a country! What monstrous lies we have been told about that country and people!" And, which has pleased me exceedingly, not one man have I met with to whom the discovery does not seem to have given delight. If I had before wanted a motive to give further extension to my account of Scotland, these exclamations would have been motives sufficient: for, they would have proved, that bare justice demanded that, which, by this publication, I am now endeavouring to do.

Were it possible, that either this statement of motives, or that any part of the work itself, could be, by even the most perverse of human beings, ascribed to any desire on my part to curry favour with the Scotch, or to any selfish desire whatsoever, were this only possible, I am afraid, that I should not have had the courage to make this statement; but, as this is completely impossible, I make it as being the just due of the people of Scotland, for whose well-being, whose honour, whose prosperity, whose lasting peace and happiness, I have as great a regard as I have for the well-being, prosperity, and happiness of those who inhabit the spot where I myself was born.

WM. COBBETT.

London, 23. Dec. 1832.

POULETT THOMSON.

THE following letter from me to the Editor of the "*True Sun*," has, I believe, appeared in that paper. The insignificance of Mr. POULETT THOMSON, his feebleness and childishness, as a Minister, or as a servant of the King rather; his silly stuff about emigration and population and free trade; all these would make him wholly unworthy of notice in this conspicuous manner; but, seeing that he is brought forward, in the manner which he has been, and produced to the public as a specimen of the men who are objects of respect and confidence with the enlightened part of the people, the exposition contained in the following letter becomes necessary. This is particularly due to the people of Manchester, nearly fourteen hundred of the electors of which voted for me. It is due in a more particular manner to the supporters of Mr. LOYD and Mr. HOPE, who, not less than my supporters, hold the choice of this placeman in horror.

After my letter to the Editor of the "*True Sun*," I shall insert another letter addressed to Mr. THOMSON himself, by a most respectable elector of Manchester, a rich man, what is called a Tory, perhaps; but, at any rate, a man who does not like to see his town disgraced by the election of this placeman of childish endowments, and of principles so shuffling. With these expositions before them, my readers will do justice to the town of Manchester, where everybody has behaved well, the little faction of PRIGS excepted. It is most insolent, or it is most brutally ignorant, in Dr. BLACK to tell his readers that the whole of the intelligence of Manchester was on the side of THOMSON! Where, then, were the nearly three thousand electors (leaving my nearly 1,400 out of the question), where were the nearly 3,000 electors who voted for Mr. LOYD and Mr. HOPE? Have they no intelligence? Had they no respectability? Why, I do verily believe, that in point of fortune; in point of real wealth; there might have been taken two hundred of voters from either of these gen-

tleman, possessing more wealth, and ten thousand times more commercial and moral character, than the whole of the voters for THOMSON put together. It is not within the compass of probability that I myself shall ever again have any personal interest in the decision of an election at Manchester; and it was purely the point of honour that made me proceed so far as I did in the late contest, I am not sorry for having done it, however; for the part which I took served to drag out the PRIGS into the glare of full day; and it brought me acquainted, more intimately than I should otherwise have been, with the real character of the several classes of persons in that town; and I should not do my duty if I did not most explicitly declare, that, in every class I saw, with the exception of the partisans of THOMSON, nothing that was not fair and honourable, and indicative of real public spirit, as well as of good private character. The town feels the deep disgrace of having returned this placeman, the PRIGS who carried on the intrigue will never again dare to show their faces before the public; as I said before, they have stung their town; but, like other reptiles, the very act of stinging destroys them for ever.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TRUE SUN.

Bolt-court, 1. January, 1833.

SIR,

HOPING and believing, that we are, after living for so many years under the mortification of seeing ourselves subject to all the evils arising from a mercenary and corrupt daily press, now destined to behold, in your paper, that freedom and spirit and absence of corrupt influence which ought to be the characteristics of the press, I beg leave to trouble you with some remarks on an article, in the *Morning Chronicle* of this day, relative to the election of Mr. POULETT THOMSON, as one of the members for MANCHESTER, and relative to what passed at a DINNER, given to that gentleman in that town, since the election. I am aware of the greatness of the trespass which I am proposing to commit on your valuable columns, by requesting

you to insert, before you insert my remarks, the article of which I have just spoken; but, without this, the remarks must necessarily lose a great part of their force; and, besides, it has always been my practice, to let my readers see both sides fairly and fully. At the same time, let me observe, that I shall not be either offended or disappointed, if you should, for any reason whatever, not think it proper to comply with this request. The article, to which I allude, is as follows:

The dinner given on Thursday last to the two representatives for Manchester, Mr. Phillips and Mr. Poulett Thomson, is, in many respects, deserving of attention. Such an assembly is not certainly of every-day occurrence. On this occasion 1,300 gentlemen, all possessed of some property, many were wealthy, *all distinguished for their respectability and intelligence*, were united under one roof. With the exception, too, of eight visitors, they were all electors of the borough. It is unnecessary for us to observe that Manchester is now the acknowledged *commercial metropolis of the world*, that it is the centre of that which gives to this country its distinctive character—our manufacturing system. We deem the approbation by the merchants and manufacturers of Manchester of the principles acted on by Mr. Poulett Thomson, as of *unspeakable importance*. Here are the men who have the deepest interest in the commercial prosperity of the country, and who, by their knowledge and skill, are best acquainted with the sources of our commercial greatness, and the means by which it can be preserved and advanced, not satisfied with a *cold approbation* of the public conduct of Mr. THOMSON, but in order to mark their peculiar sense of the importance to the country of the course he is pursuing, soliciting him, *though a stranger*, and *without solicitation on his part* to represent them *the very moment* the suffrage was communicated to them. Mr. Poulett Thomson was known to the Manchester electors *principally* from his connexion with the question of free commerce. His *general* political character is in perfect accordance with the politics of the mass of the educated population of Manchester; but that alone, much as they were satisfied with him in that respect, would never have caused him to be even thought of, had it not been combined with his *bold and enlightened opinions on trade*. It was to strengthen and encourage him in his career, to silence the curs who were perpetually snarling at him—it was to give a demonstration which could not be challenged, that he had the enlightened commercial world on his side, that the electors of Manchester were chiefly anxious to connect him with them as their representative. His election cannot be said to be the work of any delusion fostered by the press—

any unfair influence; for of six newspapers published in Manchester, five were bitterly opposed to the return of Mr. P. Thomson; and this affords a proof that those who attribute omnipotence to the press, forget that the press is powerful only in the proportion in which it espouses the good cause. The electors of Manchester, at all events, have proved *that they can think for themselves*. The electors of Manchester were not only assailed by their own newspapers, but strong recommendations of Mr. Loyd appeared in our own columns, and also in the columns of our contemporaries, the *Times* and *Globe*. The truth is, we believed Mr. Loyd to be an able and conscientious reformer, and we were aware at the time neither of the *prevalence of the wish* to return Mr. P. Thomson, nor of the importance which they attached to his return, as a triumph of sound principles. Neither had we been made acquainted with the influence which the appearance of a conservative candidate in Manchester had on the liberalism of Mr. Loyd. If ever, therefore, a candidate appeared under circumstances little calculated to aid the cause on which his claims rested, it was the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. *All the other candidates had completed their canvass before he was thought of*, and Mr. Loyd had even enjoyed the advantage of the strong newspaper recommendations to which we have alluded, and the recommendations of many respectable friends in Manchester, and the support of all the influence of the Bank establishment. And yet the Manchester electors, *judging and acting for themselves*, were steady to their purpose, and in the contest for the principles of Mr. P. Thomson, obtained a triumph without incurring any other expense than that of a few placards and advertisements. Mr. Thomson was *completely a stranger* in Manchester; and we have been assured by a *most respectable merchant of that city*, that there were not perhaps twenty people in it who could say they had ever set eyes on him. We yesterday gave a brief extract of the proceedings at the dinner. We this day give from *The Manchester Chronicle* what appears to be a pretty full account of the speech of Mr. Poulett Thomson, which will deservedly be the subject of much discussion throughout the country. The very great length of the report in the Manchester papers—that in *The Manchester Times* extending to ten closely-printed columns—will not allow us to do more than extract the speech of Mr. Thomson; but as it is of immense importance that the motives of the Manchester electors in this selection should be properly appreciated, we must here avail ourselves of the following passage in the *very able speech of Mr. Shuttleworth*.

Now, Sir, the object of this article clearly is, to cause it to be believed that Mr. THOMSON is really and truly the free choice of the people of Manchester; or, at least, of all that which is here

called, in the true *Castlereaghan style*, "the *respectability and intelligence* of Manchester;" and this being the object, nothing was ever more *destitute of truth* than the fact, and few attempts were ever more destitute of *political honesty*, or (and the editor of the *Chronicle* may take his choice) more deeply marked with *political ignorance*.

The facts relating to Mr. POULETT THOMSON's election are these: that he *was at Manchester* a little while before he was put in nomination; that he went on to GLASGOW and GREENOCK, and that he *spelled* for a seat at the latter town, where he found the door closed against any placeman; that, after this, he was nominated for Manchester, ostensibly by one DYER, a Yankee alien, a card-machine-maker; but that, secretly, by the whole of the committee of Mr. PHILLIPS. There are five men at MANCHESTER; the TWO POTTERS, dealers in cotton goods; one SHUTTLEWORTH, a cotton-dealer or agent; one BAXTER, lately a merchant; and the aforesaid DYER. These men all belong, I believe, to a new sort of *banking affair*, and are great sticklers for what they call "*opening the trade of banking*;" or, in DYER's own phrase, "*free trade in banking*," to obtain which, is, doubtless, one of their great objects.

These men have been called *radicals* for many years. They were the motion-makers and speech-makers at all public meetings, for several years, and, indeed, until the *month of June last*, when each of them began to conceive the fatal notion that he was to be member for Manchester, and began to smell from afar the sweets of honours and emoluments. They then, as it were by instinct, became *less radical*. However, they had done *no overt act* to show to the people that their views were changed; and their old character stuck to them, until just before the election took place. There could not be *five* members for Manchester; and as to *three* yielding their pretensions to the other *two*, that was out of the question. The two POTTERS were actually preparing for the thing: Tom said openly, that he *intended* to be one, or at least,

openly said words to that effect; and DICK actually had *his* canvassing cards *printed*. Their feelers on their brother radicals having convinced them that this would not do, they all agreed to bring forward Mr. PHILLIPS, just from the same sort of motive that the rival cardinals brought forwards Sixtus V.

There was little to object to in Mr. PHILLIPS, who was soon brought to give *all the pledges* on which the radicals insisted; and, therefore, the PORTERS and Co. set on foot and perfected a most scrutinizing and successful canvass, getting promises from a very large part of those electors, who promised or intended to vote *for me*, as well as from those who promised to vote for Mr. LOYD. Mr. HOPE's supporters would *hold no communication with them*; and, really, this was very much to their honour. They *cheated* Mr. LOYD out of his seat; but Mr. HOPE's adherents were resolved, at any rate, that they would not put *trust* in these men, nor hold any terms with them, be the consequences what they might.

Having secured a great majority for Mr. PHILLIPS, a *part* of the committee of Phillips *swarmed off*, and became a *committee for Thomson*, DYER, the Yankee, being at the head of the swarm; and, denying, on both sides, with the most solemn asseverations, that there was any coalition, or connexion, between them. Thus they engrafted their canvass for THOMSON upon that for PHILLIPS; and, asserting, at the same time, with the most profligate effrontery, that *I was not to go to the poll*, OLDHAM being *sure for me*, they got great part of their votes for THOMSON by mere *dint of lying*, in which there is no instance of anything to surpass them.

These, then, were the means made use of, so far, to obtain the votes. Besides which, the *crew* pledged themselves that THOMSON was for the BALLOT, and they placarded the whole town with "*Vote for THOMSON and the BALLOT*." Then, before the middle of the first day's polling, they placarded the town with "Mr. Cobbett *is returned for Oldham*; vote for *Thomson to keep out the Tories*." And

yet, the *Chronicle* tells its readers, that the choosing of him was the *voluntary* act of the people of Manchester, *judging and acting for themselves*; and that this triumph was obtained without any expense, "*other than a few placards!*" And, that there was no other influence, of any sort, exercised! Never was there a greater libel on a town, or on any body of persons in the whole world! His election was the result of a *deep-laid scheme* of a few very crafty men, trading upon the popularity that they had acquired by professions of *reform*, and by their prominence at public and popular meetings. Never was there a more impudent string of falsehoods than this that is here put forth by the *Morning Chronicle*; and, I pray you, Sir, let the mis-represented people of Manchester owe the exposure of these falsehoods to you. Let them see, that we are to have, at least, ONE London daily paper, not sold to corruption.

Thus far, Sir, as to the *causes* of Thomson's being elected. Now, let us see how subsequent transactions confirm this statement. At the *nomination*, DYER, who *proposed* him, was assailed with *every mark of public scorn* from rich as well as from *working people*. He stood half an hour, stunned with "*Off! off! off! no Yankee's placeman! no tax-eating candidate! get away! hide your head!*" The reprobation was louder, more scornful, and more unanimous, than any that I ever before heard in my life. Was this a mark of that *public and unsought* approbation of which the *Chronicle* is corrupt enough to talk? But, since the election, he has *appeared at Manchester in person*; and how has that appearance and how have the consequences of it tended to make good the assertions of the *Chronicle*? The PRIGS (for that is the name of his little faction at Manchester) did not dare to bring him out before the *inhabitants*; and yet they wanted to have it to say that he had *addressed* the people, in some way or other. They, therefore, hired the place which is described in the following account taken from the *Manchester Advertiser* of the 29.

December, to which, Sir, I beg your attention:

"MR. POULETT THOMSON.—We believe that there is hardly a body of men to be found in the island, except those who have made Mr. Poulett Thomson member for Manchester, who would not feel some degree of shame and compunction at the present moment. The mode of his introduction into Manchester, showed on their part a consciousness of guilt. Mr. Poulett Thomson, the popular Whig member, has not yet dared to address the inhabitants, or even the electors of Manchester. He came into the town on Monday, in a close carriage, to address a body of his supporters got together in the following manner:—His committee hired the dining-room of the Exchange, and issued tickets of admission with the most guarded circumspection. To one gentleman who applied for a ticket, they replied by the mouth of a fellow of the name of Chapman, an attorney as we are told, that they wondered that he should have the impudence to apply, as he had not voted for Poulett Thomson. This is the language which was used by an authorised servant of the parties associated under the name of 'the committee of Poulett Thomson.' In the same spirit, if not in the same terms, they met the applications of several other parties, declining to give admittance to any but their own friends. Notwithstanding this, a very general impression prevailed that the meeting was to be a public one; and, indeed, some placards were issued stating that this was the case. Accordingly a considerable crowd assembled, who, while the public entrance to the room was kept closed, had the mortification to see the room gradually filling by ticket admissions at a side door. This naturally produced a great irritation of feeling; and when the doors were opened, the crowd, which was mixed of all ranks, proceeded at once to hoot the member off the stage; and to their indignation he was obliged to yield, after an attempt to address the meeting in a speech, no part

"of which was audible even to the re-
"porters."

And this is the man whom the *Chronicle* holds up as having been elected purely on account of the respect which *the people of Manchester had for him!* As to the *DINNER*, few would pay *ten shillings* for the pleasure of hissing and hooting; and as to the *numbers present*, every one is pretty sure that they, for the far greater part, cost Thomson or Dyer *a pound a pair!* In short, it was just such another affair as a "*purity-dinner*" at Westminster has been for many years past. But (and here is the sore place for the PRIGS and THOMSON) this farce is *never to be played again* at Manchester! Never are the PRIGS again to show their faces at a public meeting in that really enlightened and public-spirited town. Tory, or radical, or anything else; all detest the intrigue by which Manchester has been disgraced, by returning a placeman as one of its members; and a placeman, too, so feeble in intellect, and so shuffling as to principles. The PRIGS hope, through the means of this man, to obtain an extension of their "*improved system of banking*." Pour soul! He no more dares make a proposition of the sort, than he dares vote for the ballot, in the face of Stanley's manifesto. It is what the negroes call a *souley*; that is, a poor, feeble thing; and the PRIGS will be impatient! He has his *first* and his *last* of Manchester; and for the correctness of this prediction, I would, Sir, pledge the life of
your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

NORWICH ELECTION.

To the Editor of the Commercial Gazette.

Sir,—This affair has ended, and Messrs. Gurney and Ker, the reform candidates, are in the minority! Several reasons may be assigned for this result; but I trust this event will become a powerful argument for "vote by ballot;" and then REAL REFORM will be aided by the present defeat of reformers in Norwich. This prospect may afford some consolation, yet it cannot reconcile defeat, which may be thus accounted for:—

In July last a public meeting was held; between two and three thousand persons attended; it was then and there determined unanimously to demand certain pledges of any candidate who might be brought forward in the room of the right hon. Robert Grant, the late representative; it was also determined that the result of the meeting should be communicated to William Eagle, Esq., of the Temple, and that he should be invited to become a candidate for the representation of this city. By some error in the direction, the letter containing this communication did not arrive at its destination until several days had elapsed. In the mean time another party, not sanctioned by any public meeting, invited Henry Bellendin Ker, Esq., to Norwich; and Mr. Ker being in Norwich, publicly addressed the electors in his own person, while the address from Mr. William Eagle, accepting the pledges agreed to be required at the public meeting, was being circulated by the parties who acted in pursuance of the resolutions passed at the public meeting. The friends of Mr. Ker, men of great influence, on this commenced a general and immediate canvass, which promised every prospect of success. The friends of Mr. William Eagle were not contented with Mr. Ker, who seemed not inclined to pledge himself; and the subsequent visit of Mr. William Eagle to Norwich sealed the unpopularity of Mr. Ker. But Mr. William Eagle, a true reformer, perceiving that the steps taken by the friends of Mr. Ker, precluded the probability of success on this occasion, as a real reformer, unwilling to divide reformers, declared his intention to forego his claim to the support of the Norwich electors, provided measures of beneficial reform, substantial reform, by which the millions would be raised from misery, poverty, and starvation, should be secured, to be advocated by Mr. Ker. But the friends of Mr. Ker, placing too great dependence on the word Reform, puffed up overweeningly by success, trusting to the popularity afforded them by the promised support of the Political Unionists, of whom few are electors, unheeded the offer made until the eleventh hour; consequently Mr. Wm. Eagle till that hour kept the field, and every exertion was made by the friends of that gentleman to raise him in the estimation of the electors. Whig inconsistencies were pointed out and not spared. The enforcement of an old disfranchising clause by a provision of the Reform Bill, affecting several hundred honest Norwich electors driven by need to seek parochial assistance, the preference over them given to 10l. householders; the public capacity in which Mr. Ker has been and is placed—the assistance afforded by him in framing this very bill; all these circumstances added to the enforcement of inhabited house duty on the new electors, the recent enforcement of duty on wooden-spring carts, and the hesitation of Mr. Ker to pledge himself specifically to move the repeal of any tax, or to move or

support that essential measure "vote by ballot," created such lukewarmness towards him, that the anti-reformers aware of all this, alive to their own interest, leaving no stone unturned, using the most barefaced bribery, and other means, found such easy access to electors, that neither the pledges given by Mr. Ker at the eleventh hour, and the retirement of Mr. Eagle, nor the exertions of all reformers then in his behalf, availed.

The cause of anti-reform has been triumphant, and Lord Stormont and Sir James Scarlett, are declared to be our representatives. Many cases of clear bribery it is reported can be proved, which may tend to set aside this election; but if not, this event must of necessity show the vast importance of the immediate recourse to "vote by ballot;" for it cannot be that the name of Gurney has sunk in public estimation, nor is it true that the cause of reform does not grow here; but gold has lost no power, and against its influence "vote by ballot," is the only security. * *

COBBETT'S
POOR MAN'S FRIEND;
OR, A DEFENCE OF THE RIGHTS OF
THOSE, WHO DO THE WORK AND
FIGHT THE BATTLES.

ADDRESSED TO THE
WORKING MEN OF SCOTLAND.

London, 29. Dec , 1832.

MY FRIENDS,

WHEN I WAS at GLASGOW, on the 30. October last, I, during a lecture to the TRADES' UNION of that hospitable and populous city, promised, that, as a mark of my gratitude for the kindness which I had experienced there, I would send, as soon as I conveniently could, *five thousand copies* of my little work, called the *Poor Man's Friend*, to be distributed gratis amongst the working people of GLASGOW and its environs. This promise I have now fulfilled; and, that the facts and arguments contained in this little work may be known to the opulent as well as to the working people of this kingdom, I here insert a copy of the work.

WM. COBBETT.

1. In order to do justice to this great subject: in order to treat it with perfect fairness, and in a manner becoming of me and of you, I must take the authorities *on both sides*. There are some great lawyers who have contended that the starving man is still guilty of felony or larceny, *if he take food to satisfy his hunger*; but there are a great number of other, and still greater, lawyers, who maintain the contrary. The general doctrine of those who maintain the right to take, is founded on the law of nature; and it is a saying as old as the hills, a saying in every language in the world, that "*self-preservation is the first law of nature*." The law of nature teaches every creature to prefer the preservation of its own life to all other things. Bnt, in order to have a fair view of the matter before us, we ought to inquire how it came to pass, that the laws were ever made to punish men as criminals, for taking the victuals, drink, or clothing, that they might stand in need of. We must recollect, then, that there was a time when no such laws existed; when men, like the wild animals in the fields, took what they were able to take, if they wanted it. In this state of things, all the land and all the produce belonged to all the people *in common*. Thus men were situated, when they lived under what is called *the law of nature*; when every one provided, as he could, for his self-preservation.

2. At length this state of things became changed: men entered into society; they made laws to restrain individuals from following, in certain cases, the dictates of their own will; they protected the weak against the strong; the laws secured men in the possession of lands, houses, and goods, that were called *THEIRS*; the words *MINE* and *THINE*, which mean *my own* and *thy own*, were invented to designate what we now call *a property* in things. The law necessarily made it criminal in one man to take away, or to injure the property of another man. It was, you will observe, even in this state of nature, always *a crime* to do certain things against our neighbour. To kill him, to wound him, to slander him, to expose him to suffer from the want of food, or raiment, or shelter. These, and many others, were crimes in the eye of the law of nature; but, to take share of a man's victuals and clothing; to go and insist upon sharing a part of any of the good things that he happened to have in his possession, could be *no crime*, because there was *no property* in anything, except in man's body itself. Now, civil society was formed for the *benefit* of the whole. The whole gave up their natural rights, in order that every one might, for the future, enjoy his life in greater security. This civil society was intended to change the state of man *for the better*. Before this state of civil society, the starving, the hungry, the naked man, had a right to go and provide himself with necessaries wherever he could find them. There would be sure to be some such necessitous persons in a state of civil society. Therefore, when civil society was es-

established, it is impossible to believe that it *had not in view some provision for these destitute persons*. It would be monstrous to suppose the contrary. The contrary supposition would argue, that fraud was committed upon the mass of the people in forming this civil society; for, as the sparks fly upwards, so will there always be destitute persons, to some extent or other, in *every community*, and such there are now to a considerable extent, even in the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; therefore, the formation of the civil society must have been fraudulent or tyrannical upon any other supposition than that it made provision, in some way or other, for destitute persons; that is to say, for persons unable, from some cause or other, to provide for themselves the food and raiment sufficient to preserve them from perishing. Indeed, a provision for the destitute seems *essential to the lawfulness of civil society*; and this appears to have been the opinion of BLACKSTONE, when, in the first Book and first Chapter of his Commentaries on the Laws of England, he says, "The law not only regards *life and member*, and protects every man in the enjoyment of them, but also *furnishes him with everything necessary for their support*. For there is no man so indigent or wretched, but he may demand a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life from the more opulent part of the community, by means of the several statutes enacted for the relief of the poor; a humane provision dictated by the principles of society."

3. No man will contend, that the main body of the people, in any country upon earth, and of course in England, would have consented to abandon the rights of nature; to give up their right to enjoy all things in common; no man will believe, that the main body of the people would ever have given their assent to the establishing of a state of things which should make all the lands and all the trees, and all the goods and cattle of every sort, private property; which should have shut out a large part of the people from having such property, and which should, at the same time, not have provided the means of preventing those of them, who might fall into indigence, from being *actually starved to death*! It is impossible to believe this. Men never gave their assent to enter into society on terms like these. One part of the condition upon which men entered into society was, that care should be taken that no human being should perish from want. When they agreed to enter into that state of things, which would necessarily cause some men to be rich and some men to be poor; when they gave up that right, which God had given them, to live as well as they could, and to take the means wherever they found them, the condition clearly was, the "*principle of society*;" clearly was, as BLACKSTONE defines it, that the indigent and wretched should have a right to "*demand from the rich a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life*."

4. If the society did not take care to act upon this principle; if it neglected to secure the legal means of preserving the life of the indigent and wretched; then the society itself, in so far as that wretched person was concerned, ceased to have a legal existence. It had, as far as related to him, forfeited its character of legality. It had no longer any claim to his submission to its laws. His rights of nature returned: as far as related to him, the law of nature revived in all its force: that state of things in which all men enjoyed all things in common was revived with regard to him; and he took, and he had a right to take, food and raiment, or, as Blackstone expresses it, "*a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life*." For, if it be true, as laid down by this English lawyer, that the *principles of society*; if it be true, that the very principles, or *foundations of society* dictate, that the destitute person shall have a legal demand for a supply from the rich; sufficient for all the necessities of life; if this be true, and true it certainly is, it follows of course that the principles, that is, the base, or *foundation*, of society, are subverted, are gone; and that society is, in fact, no longer what it was intended to be, when the indigent, when the person in a state of extreme necessity, cannot, at once, obtain from the rich such sufficient supply: in short, we need go no further than this passage of BLACKSTONE, to show, that civil society is subverted, and that there is, in fact, nothing legitimate in it, when the destitute and wretched have no certain and legal resource.

5. But this is so important a matter, and there have been such monstrous doctrines and projects put forth by MALTHUS, by the EDINBURGH REVIEWERS, by LAWYER SCARLETT, by LAWYER NOLAN, by STURGES BOURNE, and by an innumerable swarm of persons who have been giving before the House of Commons what they call "*evidence*:" there have been such monstrous doctrines and projects put forward by these and other persons; and there seems to be such a lurking desire to carry the hostility to the working classes still further, that I think it necessary, in order to show that these English poor-laws, which have been so much calumniated by so many greedy proprietors of land; I think it necessary to show that these poor-laws are the things which men of property, above all others, *ought to wish to see maintained*, seeing that, according to the opinions of the greatest and wisest of men, they must suffer most in consequence of the abolition of those laws; because, by the abolition of those laws, the right given by the laws of nature would revive, and the destitute would take, where they now simply demand (as BLACKSTONE expresses it) in the name of the law. There has been some difference of opinion, as to the question, whether it be *theft or no theft*; or, rather, whether it be a *criminal act or not a criminal act*, for a person, in a case of extreme necessity from want of food, to take food without the assent and even against the will, of the owner. We have, amongst our

great lawyers, Sir MATTHEW HALE and Sir WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, who contend (though as we shall see, with much feebleness, hesitation, and reservation), that it is *theft*, notwithstanding the extremity of the want; but there are many, and much higher authorities, foreign as well as English, on the other side. Before, however, I proceed to the hearing of these authorities, let me take a short view of the origin of the poor-laws in England; for that view will convince us, that, though the present law was passed but a little more than two hundred years ago, there had been something to effect the same purpose ever since England had been called England.

6. According to the common-law of England, as recorded in the *Mirroure of Justices*, a book which was written before the Norman Conquest; a book in as high reputation as any law-book, as any one in England; according to this book, chapter 1st., section 3rd., which treats of the "First constitutions made by the ancient kings;" according to this work, provision was made for the sustenance of the poor. The words are these: "It was ordained, that the poor should be sustained by parsons, by rectors of the church, and by the parishioners, so that none of them die for want of sustenance." Several hundred years later, the canons of the church show, that when the church had become rich, it took upon itself the whole of the care and expense attending the relieving of the poor. These canons, in setting forth the manner in which the tithes should be disposed of, say, "Let the priests set apart the first share for the building and ornaments of the church; let them distribute the second to the poor and strangers, with their own hands, in mercy and humility; and let them reserve the third part for themselves." This passage is taken from the canons of ELFRIC, canon 24th. At a later period, when the tithes had, in some places, been appropriated to convents, acts of Parliament were passed, compelling the impropiators to leave, in the hands of their vicar, a sufficiency for the maintenance of the poor. There were two or three acts of this sort passed, one particularly in the twelfth year of RICHARD the Second, chapter 7th. So that here we have the most ancient book on the common-law; we have the canons of the church at a later period; we have acts of Parliament at a time when the power and glory of England were at their very highest point; we have all these to tell us, that in England, from the very time that the country took the name, there was always a legal and secure provision for the poor, so that no person, however aged, infirm, unfortunate, or destitute, should suffer from want.

7. But, my friends, a time came when the provision made by the common-law, by the canons of the church, and by the acts of the Parliament coming in aid of those canons; a time arrived, when all these were rendered null by what is called the PROTESTANT REFORMATION. And, here, I must beseech you to lend

me your best attention, for, I am here going to show you, how the ENGLISH POOR-LAW came to be passed; and how it happened, that no such POOR-LAW ever came to exist in Scotland and in Ireland.

8. I have told you before, that the canon-law, the common-law, and the ancient statute-law, all insisted upon a provision for the poor, that is to say, for persons in want of a sufficiency of food, clothing, and lodging; but I must now explain this matter to you more fully; and, here, I beg you to observe these things; first, that effectual provision was made for the poor by the law of MOSES; that charity was, above all things, inculcated by JESUS CHRIST; that the Apostles most strictly adhered to his commands in this respect; that, co-eval with their teaching were their collections for the poor and needy, and that the business of those whom they appointed to be deacons, was to superintend the tables at which the poor were fed. When Christianity came to extend itself over great communities of men, the provision for the destitute became a larger and more regular concern; till at last, in all the Christian nations of the world, TITHES were established by law as an efficient, unvarying, and certain resource for the poor and necessitous. What we behold now, is a monstrous misapplication of the tithes. The ministers, and parsons of different degrees, and even lay persons, seem to regard them as belonging to them, instead of belonging to the necessitous part of the community. A part of the tithes, if not wanted for the purpose of charity, were allowed to be applied to the building and the ornaments of the churches; but, it was always held, that even the altar might be stripped of its ornaments; and that its gold and silver ought to be sold and turned into food and raiment, if necessary to the relief of the poor. In proof of this, take the following beautiful passage from St. AMBROSE, one of the fathers of the church. "When other means are wanting wherewith to feed the poor, apply even the sacred vases to that purpose. The church of CHRIST stands in no need of gold, except for the purpose of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked and freeing the captive. If the necessitous come to starvation, how will the ministers of the church answer their Saviour, when he shall say: You had gold, and you might have relieved the poor; you had gold, and you might have freed the captive; it was the live vessels, and not the golden ones, that you ought to have preserved. Will the accused be able to answer this reproach by saying: 'I was, O Lord, afraid of diminishing the magnificence of thy temple.'?" The divine reply will be: "My sacraments derive not their virtue from gold; the feeding of the poor, the freeing of the captive, constitute the best ornaments of my temple: the most precious vases are those which are employed in sustaining the life of man."

9. The priests, the teachers of the Christian

religion, had no claim to anything for themselves, beyond what was absolutely necessary to the sustaining of life and health; and that, too, in the most unostentatious and frugal manner of life. ST. PAUL had said, "*that the labourer was worthy of his hire*;" and that he who served at "the altar, should live by the altar;" this, having been, even more than a thousand years ago, interpreted by some of the clergy to mean, that they had a right to appropriate a large part of the church revenues to their own use, another father of the church gives them this reproof upon the subject: "The labourer," says he, "is truly worthy his hire, and he who serves at the altar must live by it. Let him live by the altar, but let him be satisfied with his food and clothing, according to the precept of the apostle. Let him live by the altar, but let him not be enriched; let him not waste in vain expenses the sacred oblations; let him not accumulate wealth, as ST. JEROME observes, out of the ecclesiastical property. Let him live by the altar, but let him not erect sumptuous palaces, appropriating for purposes of luxury that which is naturally destined for the purposes of charity. Let him live by the altar, but let him not accumulate riches; nor spend in vain and superfluous enjoyments the sacred property of the church. Let him live by the altar, but let him not enrich his relations with the revenues of the church. Let him remember, that it is a sacrilegious deed to apply the goods of the poor to those who are not in need. The patrimony of the church is the patrimony of the poor, and the ministers of the church are guilty of a sacrilegious impiety, if they attempt to keep for themselves anything whatever besides their food and clothing, because they are not the proprietors, but simply the administrators and distributors of the patrimony of the church."

10. One would think that St. Jerome had actually seen, in a vision, the parsons and ministers of England and Scotland of the present day! To prevent all temptation to pilfer the goods of the poor, the clergy were forbidden to marry. In England, Scotland, and Ireland, besides the parish churches and bishoprics, and the revenues intrusted to them, there were numerous monasteries and hospitals, and free chapelries, founded and endowed either by the sovereigns or by private persons; but the endowments were always merely in trust for the benefit of the poor, after providing for the monks, the nuns, and other persons belonging to the foundation, and these were all forbidden to marry, and most strictly prohibited from applying any part of the revenues to their own private use, or to that of their relations or friends. Thus the tithes and the property of the monasteries and hospitals, which are now called abbey-lands, always were, in reality and in practice, the patrimony of the poor; and always were so considered by all the laws of these three kingdoms. But in the reign of King HENRY the

Eighth of England, the aristocracy agreed with the King to seize upon the abbey-lands, and divide them amongst themselves; and in that reign and in the three succeeding reigns, they took away the tithes and the whole of the church revenues; and from that time to this they have either kept them to themselves, or disposed of them at their pleasure.

11. The people of England thus despoiled of their patrimony, and left without any source of relief, in case of need, demanded A COMPENSATION for that which had been taken from them. At first, those who had got possession of the church revenues continued to give relief, in some degree, out of those revenues; but this relief grew smaller and smaller, till at last the people of England insisted upon a regular settled compensation. But now, instead of the aristocracy giving relief out of the tithes and the abbey lands, they passed a law to provide for a general assessment of all persons occupying real property, which assessment has continued to the present day, under the name of *poor-rates*. This law, which was passed in the 43d year of the reign of ELIZABETH, provided for the relief of the poor in the best and most effectual manner. It compelled every parish to appoint, on Easter Monday of every year, by a majority of voices of the rate payers, an OVERSEER (*being a rate-payer in the parish*) to collect whatever money might be wanted for the relief of the poor, and to distribute such relief to whomsoever, belonging to the parish, might stand in need of it. The overseer was not limited to any specific sum, but was to demand and to collect whatever sum might be wanted.

12. Thus, things went on in England for more than two hundred years. The people of Scotland, harassed and oppressed by their sanguinary chieftains, obtained no compensation at all. At their "*union*" with England, great care was taken not to give them this law; and the miserable pittance which they get now, and that too, only in some parts of Scotland, is a mockery rather than the reality of relief; and as to poor Ireland, as it did not turn Protestant, it had to think itself happy if its people were allowed to starve without being compelled to die with apostasy on their lips. But now, *mark well* as to England herself. The taxes having pressed all the industrious classes to the earth, the poor have become forty times as numerous as they were fifty years ago; and of course the *poor-rates*, or charges upon the land, have become heavy in proportion. The Parliament instead of removing the cause of this increase of poverty, have begun at the other end; namely, diminishing the proportion of relief given to the necessitous. In order to do this, it made a monstrous alteration in the poor-law: it enacted, in the first place, that, all matters in parish vestries should be decided, not by a majority of the *single votes* of the rate-payers; but that every rate payer should have a *number of votes*, in proportion to the amount of his occupation or possessions; so that this threw

the whole power of the vestries into the hands of the rich. Then, another law immediately followed this, authorising these rich parishioners to form *select vestries*, and the law gave to these select vestries the sole power of giving or of withholding relief, subject to no control, not even of the magistrates. This law further authorised the *select vestry* to have a HIRED OVERSEER, who might be an utter stranger to the parish; and the real parochial overseer was thus deprived of all power to afford relief, and the whole of the poor were thus placed solely at the mercy of the rich! And, people of Scotland, these two laws, well known by the name of Sturges Bourne's Bills, are the real cause of all those disgraceful doings, all those troubles, all those alarms, of which you have heard amongst your brethren of the South; and what is to be the end of all these, no man can conjecture, until he shall see what is the character, and what are likely to be the measures of the Parliament now about to assemble.

13. Thus, then, the present poor-laws are no new thing. They are no gift to the working-people. You hear the greedy part of the landowners everlastingly complaining against this law of QUEEN ELIZABETH. They pretend that it was an unfortunate law. They affect to regard it as a great INNOVATION, seeing that no such law existed before; but, as I have shown, a better law existed before, having the same object in view. I have shown, that the "Reformation," as it is called, had swept away that which had been secured to the poor by the common-law, by the canons of the church, and by ancient acts of Parliament. There was nothing new, then, in the way of benevolence towards the people, in this celebrated act of Parliament of the reign of QUEEN ELIZABETH; and the landowners would act wisely by holding their tongues upon the subject; or, if they be too noisy, one may look into their GRANTS, and see if we cannot find something THERE to help out the present parochial assessments.

14. Having now seen the origin of the present poor-laws and the justice of their due execution, let us return to those authorities of which I was speaking but now, and an examination into which will show the extreme danger of listening to those projectors who would abolish the poor-laws; that is to say, who would sweep away that provision which was established in the reign of QUEEN ELIZABETH, from a conviction that it was absolutely necessary to preserve the peace of the country and the lives of the people. I observed before that there has been some difference of opinion amongst lawyers as to the question, whether it be, or be not, *theft*, to take, without his consent and against his will, the victuals of another, in order to prevent the taker from starving. Sir MATTHEW HALE and Sir WILLIAM BLACKSTONE say that it is *theft*. I am now going to quote the several authorities on both sides, and it will be necessary for me to indicate the works which I quote from by the

words, letters, and figures which are usually made use of in quoting from these works. Some part of what I shall quote will be in Latin: but I shall put nothing in that language of which I will not give you the translation. I beg you to read these quotations with the greatest attention; for you will find, at the end of your reading, that you have obtained great knowledge upon the subject, and knowledge, too, which will not soon depart from your minds.

15. I begin with Sir MATTHEW HALE (a Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench in the reign of Charles the Second), who, in his *Pleas of the Crown*, chap. IX., has the following passage, which I put in distinct paragraphs, and mark A, B, and C.

16. A. "Some of the casuists, and particularly COVARRUVIUS, tom. I. *De furti et rapinae restitutione*, § 3, 4, p. 473; and GROTIUS, *de jure belli ac pacis*; lib. II. cap. 2. § 6, tells us, that in case of extreme necessity, either of hunger or clothing, the civil distributions of property cease, and by a kind of tacit condition the first community doth return, and upon this those common assertions are grounded: '*Quicquid necessitas cogit, defendit.*' [Whatever necessity calls for, it justifies.] '*Necessitas est lex temporis et loci.*' [Necessity is the law of time and place.] '*In casu extremæ necessitatis omnia sunt communia.*' [In case of extreme necessity, all things are in common]; and, therefore, in such case *theft is no theft*, or at least not punishable as theft; and some even of our own lawyers have asserted the same; and very bad use hath been made of this concession by some of the Jesuitical casuists of France, who have thereupon advised apprentices and servants to rob their masters, where they have been indeed themselves in want of necessaries, of clothes or victuals; whereof, they tell them, they themselves are the competent judges; and by this means let loose, as much as they can, by their doctrine of probability, all the ligaments of property and civil society."

17. B. "I do, therefore, take it, that, where persons live under the same civil government, as here in England, that rule, at least by the laws of England, is false; and, therefore, if a person being under necessity for want of victuals, or clothes, shall, upon that account, clandestinely, and *animo furandi*, [with intent to steal,] steal another man's goods, it is felony, and a crime, by the laws of England, punishable with death; although the judge before whom the trial is, in this case (as in other cases of extremity) be by the laws of England intrusted with a power to relieve the offender, before or after judgment in order to the obtaining the king's mercy. For, 1st, men's properties would be under a strange insecurity, being laid open to other men's necessities, whereof no man can possibly judge, but the party himself. And, 2nd, Because by the laws of this kingdom [here

"he refers to the 43 Eliz. cap. 2] sufficient provision is made for the supply of such necessities by collections for the poor, and by the power of the civil magistrate. Consonant hereto seems to be the law even among the Jews; if we may believe the wisest of kings. Proverbs vi. 30, 31. 'Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry, but if he be found, he shall restore seven-fold, he shall give all the substance of his house.' It is true, death among them was not the penalty of theft, yet his necessity gave him no exception from the ordinary punishment inflicted by their law upon that offence."

18. C. "Indeed this rule, '*in casu extremæ necessitatis omnia sunt communia*,' does hold, in some measure, in some particular cases, where, by the tacit consent of nations, or of some particular countries or societies, it hath obtained. First, among the Jews, it was lawful in case of hunger to pull ears of standing corn, and eat (Matt. xii. 1); and for one to pass through a vineyard, or oliveyard, to gather and eat without carrying away. Deut. xxiii. 24, 25. SECOND, By the Rhodian law, and the common-maritime custom, if the common provision for the ship's company fail, the master may, under certain temperaments, break open the private chests of the mariners or passengers and make a distribution of that particular and private provision for the preservation of the ship's company." Vide *Consolato del Mare*, cap. 256. *Les Costumes de la Mer*, p. 77."

19. Sir WILLIAM BLACKSTONE agrees, in substance, with HALE; but he is, as we shall presently see, much more eager to establish his doctrine; and, we shall see besides, that he has not scrupled to be guilty of misquoting, and of very shamefully garbling, the Scripture, in order to establish his point. We shall find him flatly contradicting the laws of England; but, he might have spared the Holy Scriptures, which, however, he has not done.

20. To return to HALE, you see he is compelled to begin with acknowledging that there are great authorities against him; and he could not say that GROTIUS was not one of the most virtuous as well as one of the most learned of mankind. HALE does not know very well what to do with those old sayings about the justification which hard necessity gives: he does not know what to do with the maxim, that, "in case of extreme necessity all things are owned in common." He is exceedingly puzzled with these ancient authorities, and flies off into prattle rather than argument, and tells us a story about "Jesuitical" casuists in France, who advised apprentices and servants to rob their masters, and that they thus "let loose the ligaments of property and civil society." I fancy that it would require a pretty large portion of that sort of faith which induced this Protestant Judge to send witches and wizards to the gallows; a pretty large portion of this sort of

faith, to make us believe, that the "casuists of France," who, doubtless, had servants of their own, would teach servants to rob their masters! In short, this prattle of the judge seems to have been nothing more than one of those Protestant effusions which were too much in fashion at the time when he wrote.

21. He begins his second paragraph, or paragraph B., by saying, that he "takes it" to be so and so; and then comes another qualified expression; he talks of civil government "as here in England." Then he says, that the rule of GROTIUS and others, against which he has been contending, "he takes to be false, at least," says he, "by the laws of England." After he has made all these qualifications, he then proceeds to say that such taking is theft; that it is felony; that it is a crime which the laws of England punish with death! But, as if stricken with remorse at putting the frightful words upon paper; as if feeling shame for the law and for England itself, he instantly begins to tell us, that the judge who presides at the trial is intrusted, "by the laws of England," with power to reprieve the offender, in order to the obtaining of the King's mercy! Thus he softens it down. He will have it to be LAW to put a man to death in such a case; but he is ashamed to leave his readers to believe, that an English judge and an English king WOULD OBEY THIS LAW!

22. Let us now hear the reasons which he gives for this which he pretends to be law. His first reason is, that there would be no security for property, if it were laid open to the necessities of the indigent, of which necessities no man but the takers themselves could be the judge. He talks of a "strange insecurity;" but, upon my word, no insecurity could be half so strange as this assertion of his own. BLACKSTONE has just the same argument. "Nobody," says he, "would be a judge of the wants of the taker, but the taker himself;" and BLACKSTONE, copying the very words of HALE, talks of the "strange insecurity" arising from this cause. Now, then, suppose a man to come into my house, and to take away a bit of bacon. Suppose me to pursue him and seize him. He would tell me that he was starving for want of food. I hope that the bare statement would induce me, or any man in the world that I do call or ever have called my friend, to let him go without further inquiry; but, if I chose to push the matter further, there would be the magistrate. If he chose to commit the man, would there not be a jury and a judge to receive evidence and to ascertain whether the extreme necessity existed or not?

23. Aye, says Judge HALE; but I have another reason, a devilish deal better than this, "and that is, the act of the 43d year of the reign of QUEEN ELIZABETH!" Aye, my old boy, that is a thumping reason!" "Sufficient provision is made for the supply of such necessities by collections for the poor, and by the power of the civil magistrate." Aye, aye! that is the reason; and, Mr. Sir MATTHEW

HALE, there is *no other reason*, say what you will about the matter. There stand the overseer and the civil magistrate to take care that such necessities be provided for; and if they did not stand there for that purpose, the law of nature would be revived in behalf of the suffering creature.

24. HALE, not content however with this act of QUEEN ELIZABETH, and still hankering after this hard doctrine, furbishes up a bit of Scripture, and calls Solomon the *wisest of kings* on account of these two verses which he has taken. HALE observes, indeed, that the Jews did not put thieves to death; but, to restore seven-fold was the *ordinary punishment*, inflicted by their law, for theft; and here, says he, we see, that the extreme necessity gave no exemption. This was a piece of such flagrant sophistry on the part of HALE, that he could not find in his heart to send it forth to the world without a qualifying observation; but even this qualifying observation left the sophistry still so shameful, that his editor, Mr. EMLYN, who published the work under the authority of the House of Commons, did not think it consistent with his reputation to suffer this passage to go forth unaccompanied with the following remark: "But their (the Jews) 'ordinary punishment being entirely *pecuniary*, could affect him *only when he was found in a condition to answer it*; and therefore the same reasons which could justify that, can, by no means, be extended to a *corporal*, much less to a *capital punishment*." Certainly: and this is the fair interpretation of these two verses of the Proverbs. PUFFENDORF, one of the greatest authorities that the world knows anything of, observes, upon the argument built upon this text of Scripture, "It may be objected, that, in Proverbs, chap. vi. verses 30, 31, he is called a *thief*, and pronounced obnoxious to the penalty of theft, who steals to satisfy his hunger; but whoever closely views and considers that text will find that the thief there censured is neither in such *extreme necessity* as we are now supposing, nor seems to have fallen into his needy condition merely by ill fortune, without his own idleness or default: for the context implies, that he had a house and goods sufficient to make seven-fold restitution; which he might have either sold or pawned; a chapman or creditor being easily to be met with in times of plenty and peace; for we have no grounds to think that the fact there mentioned is supposed to be committed, either in time of war, or upon account of the extraordinary price of provisions."

25. Besides this, I think it is clear that these two verses of the Proverbs do not apply to *one and the same person*; for in the first verse it is said, that men *do not despise* a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry. How, then, are we to reconcile this with *morality*? Are we not to despise a thief? It is clear that the word *thief* does not apply to the first case; but to the second case only;

and that the distinction was here made for the express purpose of preventing the man who took food to relieve his hunger *from being confounded with the thief*. Upon any other interpretation, it makes the passage contain nonsense and immorality; and, indeed, GORIUS says that the latter text does not apply to the person mentioned in the former. The latter text could not mean a man taking food from necessity. It is *impossible* that it can mean that; because the man who was starving for want of food *could not have sevenfold; could not have any substance in his house*. But what are we to think of JUDGE BLACKSTONE, who, in his Book IV., chap. 2, really *garbles* these texts of Scripture. He clearly saw the effect of the expression, "MEN DO NOT DESPISE;" he saw what an awkward figure these words made, coming before the words "A THIEF;" he saw that, with these words in the text, he could never succeed in making his readers believe that a man ought to be *hanged* for taking food to save his life. He clearly saw that he could not make men believe that *God had said this*, unless he could, somehow or other, get rid of those words about NOT DESPISING the thief that took victuals when he was hungry. Being, therefore, very much pestered and annoyed by these words about NOT DESPISING, what does he do but fairly *leave them out*? And not only leave them out, but leave out a part of both the verses, keeping in that part of each that suited him, and no more; nay, further, leaving out one word, and putting in another, giving a sense to the whole which he knew well never was intended. He states the passage to be this: "If a thief steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry, *he shall restore sevenfold, and shall give all the substance of his house*." No broomstick that ever was handled would have been too heavy or too rough for the shoulders of this dirty souled man. HALE, with all his desire to make out a case in favour of severity, has given us the words fairly: but this shuffling fellow; this smooth-spoken and mean wretch, who is himself *thief* enough, God knows, if stealing other men's thoughts and words constitute theft; this intolerably mean reptile has, in the first place, left out the words "men do not despise;" then he has left out the words at the beginning of the next text, "*but if he be found*." Then in place of the "*he*," which comes before the words "*shall give*," he puts the word "*and*;" and thus he makes the whole apply to the poor creature that takes to satisfy his soul when he is hungry! He leaves out every mitigating word of the Scripture; and, in his reference, he represents the passage to be in one verse! Perhaps, even in the history of the conduct of crown-lawyers, there is not to be found mention of an act so coolly bloody-minded as this. It has often been said of this BLACKSTONE, that he not only *lied* himself, but *made others lie*; he has made, as far as he was able, a liar of King Solomon himself; he has wilfully garbled the Holy Scripture; and that,

too, for the manifest purpose of justifying cruelty in courts and judges; for the manifest purpose of justifying the most savage oppression of the poor.

26. After all, HALE has not the courage to send forth this doctrine of his, without allowing, that the case of extreme necessity does, in "some measure," and "in particular cases," and, "by the tacit or silent consent of nations," hold good! What a crowd of qualifications is here! With what reluctance he confesses that which all the world knows to be true, that the disciples of JESUS CHRIST pulled off, without leave, the ears of standing corn, and ate them, "*being an hungered*." And here are two things to observe upon. In the first place this corn was not what we call corn here in England, or else it would have been very droll sort of stuff to crop off and eat. It was what the Americans call *Indian corn*, what the French call *Turkish corn*, and what is called *corn* (as being far surpassing all other in excellence) in the Eastern countries where the Scriptures were written. About four or five ears of this corn, of which you strip all the husk off in a minute, are enough for a man's breakfast or dinner; and by about the middle of August this corn is just as wholesome and as efficient as bread. So that this was *something* to take and eat without the owner's leave; it was something of value; and observe, that the Pharisees, though so strongly disposed to find fault with everything that was done by Jesus Christ and his disciples, did not find fault of their taking the corn to eat; did not call them *thieves*; did not propose to punish them for *theft*; but found fault of them only for having *plucked the corn on the Sabbath day*! To pluck the corn was to do work, and these severe critics found fault of this working on the Sabbath-day. Then, out comes another fact, which HALE might have noticed if he had chosen it; namely, that our Saviour reminds the Pharisees that "*DAVID and his companions, being an hungered entered into the House of God, and did eat the show-bread, to eat which was unlawful in anybody but the priests*." Thus, that which would have been *sacrilege* under any other circumstances; that which would have been one of the most horrible of crimes against the law of God, became no crime at all when committed by a person *pressed by hunger*.

27. Nor has Judge HALE fairly interpreted the two verses of DEUTERONOMY. He represents the matter thus: that, if you be *passing through* a vineyard or an olive-yard you may gather and eat, without being deemed a thief. This interpretation would make an Englishman believe, that the Scripture allowed of this taking and eating, only where there was a *lawful foot-way* through the vineyard. This is a very gross misrepresentation of the matter; for if you look at the two texts, you will find, that they say that, "*when thou comest into*;" that is to say, when thou *enterest or goest into*, "*thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure,*"

"but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel;" that is to say, that you should not go and make wine in his vineyard and carry it away. Then in case of the corn, precisely the same law is laid down. You may pluck with your *hand*; but not use the *hook*, or a *sickle*. Nothing can be plainer than this: no distinction can be wiser, nor more just. HALE saw the force of it; and therefore, as these texts made very strongly against him, he does not give them at full length, but gives us a misrepresenting abbreviation.

28. He had, however, too much regard for his reputation to conclude without acknowledging the right of seizing on the provisions of others *at sea*. He allows that private chests may be *broken open* to prevent men from dying with hunger at sea. He does not stop to tell us why men's lives are *more precious* on sea than on land. He does not attempt to reconcile these liberties given by the Scripture, and by the maritime laws, with his own hard doctrine. In short, he brings us to this at last: that he will *not acknowledge*, that it is *not theft* to take another man's goods, without his consent, under any circumstances; but, while he will not acknowledge this, he plainly leaves us to conclude, that no English judge and no English king will *ever punish* a poor creature that takes victuals to save himself from perishing; and he plainly leaves us to conclude, that it is the *poor-laws* of England; that it is their existence and *their due execution*, which deprive everybody in England of the right to take food and raiment in case of extreme necessity.

29. Here I agree with him most cordially; and it is because I agree with him in this, that I deprecate the abominable projects of those who would annihilate the poor-laws, seeing that it is those very poor-laws which give under all circumstances, really legal security to *property*. Without them, cases must frequently arise, which would, according to the law of nature, according to the law of God, and, as we shall see before we have done, according to the law of England, bring us into a state, or, at least, bring particular persons into a state, which as far as related to them would cause the law of nature to *revive*, and to make *all things to be owned in common*. To adhere, then, to these poor-laws; to cause them to be duly executed, to prevent every encroachment upon them, to preserve them as the apple of our eye, is the duty of every Englishman, as far as he has capacity so to do.

30. I have, my friends, cited, as yet, authorities only *on one side* of this great subject, which it was my wish to discuss in this one Number. I find that to be impossible, without leaving undone much more than half my work. I am extremely anxious to cause this matter to be well understood, not only by the working classes, but by the owners of the land and the magistrates. I deem it to be of the greatest possible importance; and, while writing on it, I address myself to you, because I most sincerely declare that I have a greater respect for

you than for any other body of persons that I know anything of.

31. So much for Judge HALE's doctrine upon the subject, and for the foul conduct of BLACKSTONE, the author of the *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. I will not treat this unprincipled lawyer, this shocking court sycophant; I will not treat him as he has treated King Solomon and the Holy Scriptures; I will not garble, misquote, and belie him, as he garbled, misquoted, and belied them; I will give the whole of the passage to which I allude, and which my readers may find in the Fourth Book of his *Commentaries*. I request you to read it with great attention; and to compare it, very carefully, with the passage that I have quoted from Sir MATTHEW HALE, which you will find in paragraphs from 16 to 18 inclusive. The passage from Blackstone is as follows:

31. "There is yet another case of necessity, which has occasioned great speculation among the writers upon general law; viz. whether a man in extreme want of food or clothing may justify stealing either, to relieve his present necessities. And this both GROTIUS and PUFFENDORF, together with many other of the foreign jurists, hold in the affirmative; maintaining by many ingenious, humane, and plausible reasons, that in such cases the community of goods by a kind of tacit concession of society is revived. And some even of our own lawyers have held the same; though it seems to be an unwarranted doctrine, borrowed from the notions of some civilians: at least it is now antiquated, the law of England admitting no such excuse at present. And this its doctrine is agreeable not only to the sentiments of many of the wisest ancients, particularly CICERO, who holds that 'suum cuique incommum ferendum est, potius quam de alterius commodis detrahendum;' but also to the Jewish law, as certified by King Solomon himself: 'If a thief steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry, he shall restore sevenfold, and shall give al the substance of his house;' which was the ordinary punishment for theft in that kingdom. And this is founded upon the highest reason: for men's properties would be under a strange insecurity, if liable to be invaded according to the wants of others; of which wants no man can possibly be an adequate judge, but the party himself who pleads them. In this country especially, there would be a peculiar impropriety in admitting so dubious an excuse: for by our laws such a sufficient provision is made for the poor by the power of the civil magistrate, that it is impossible that the most needy stranger should ever be reduced to the necessity of thieving to support nature. This case of a stranger is, by the way, the strongest instance put by Baron PUFFENDORF, and whereon he builds his principal arguments: which, however they may hold upon the continent, where the parsimonious industry of the natives orders every one to

"work or starve, yet must lose all their weight and efficacy in England, where charity is reduced to a system, and interwoven in our very constitution. Therefore, our laws ought by no means to be taxed with being unmerciful, for denying this privilege to the necessitous; especially when we consider, that the king, on the representation of his ministers of justice, hath a power to soften the law, and to extend mercy in cases of peculiar hardship. An advantage which is wanting in many states, particularly those which are democratical: and these have in its stead introduced and adopted, in the body of the law itself, a multitude of circumstances tending to alleviate its rigour. But the founders of our constitution thought it better to vest in the crown the power of pardoning peculiar objects of compassion, than to countenance and establish theft by one general undistinguishing law."

33. First of all, I beg you to observe, that this passage is merely a *flagrant act of theft* committed upon Judge HALE: next, you perceive, that which I noticed in paragraph 25, a most base and impudent garbling of the Scriptures. Next, you see, that BLACKSTONE, like HALE, comes, at last, to the *poor-laws*; and tells us that to take other men's goods without leave, is theft, because "charity is here reduced to a system, and interwoven in our very constitution." That is to say, to relieve the necessitous; to prevent their suffering from want; completely to render starvation impossible, makes a part of our very constitution. "THEREFORE, our laws ought by no means to be taxed with being unmerciful for denying this privilege to the necessitous." Pray mark the word *therefore*. You see, our laws, he says, are not to be taxed with being unmerciful in deeming the necessitous taker a thief. And why are they not to be deemed unmerciful? BECAUSE the laws provide effectual relief for the necessitous. It follows, then, of course, even according to BLACKSTONE himself, that if the constitution *had not* provided this effectual relief for the necessitous, then the laws *would have been unmerciful* in deeming the necessitous taker a thief.

34. But now let us hear what GROTIUS and that PUFFENDORF say; let us hear what these great writers on the law of nature and of nations say upon this subject. BLACKSTONE has mentioned the names of them both: but he has not thought proper to notice their arguments, much less has he attempted to answer them. They are two of the most celebrated men that ever wrote; and their writings are referred to as high authority, with regard to all the subjects of which they have treated. The following is a passage from GROTIUS, on War and Peace, Book II. chap. 2.

35. "Let us see, further, what common right there appertains to men in those things which have already become the property of individuals. Some persons, perchance, may

“consider it strange to question this, as proprietorship seems to have absorbed all that right which arose out of a state of things in common. But it is not so. For, it is to be considered, *what was the intention of those who first introduced private property*, which we may suppose to have been such, as to deviate as little as possible from *natural equity*. For if even *written laws* are to be construed in that sense as far as it is practicable, much more so are *customs*, which are not fettered by the chains of writers.—Hence it follows, first, that, in case of *extreme necessity*, the *pristine right of using things revives*, as much as if they had remained in common; because, in all human laws, as well as in the law of private property, *this case of extreme necessity appears to have been excepted*.—So, if the means of sustenance, as in case of a sea-voyage, should chance to fail, that which any individual may have, should be shared in common. And thus, a fire having broken out, I am justified in destroying the house of my neighbour, in order to preserve my own house; and I may cut in two the ropes or cords amongst which any ship is driven, if it cannot be otherwise disentangled. All which exceptions are not made in the written law, but are presumed.—For the opinion has been acknowledged amongst divines, that, if any one, in such case of necessity, take from another person what is requisite for the preservation of his life, *he does not commit a theft*. The meaning of which definition is not, as many contend, that the proprietor of the thing be bound to give to the needy upon the principle of *charity*; but, that all things distinctly vested in proprietors ought to be regarded as such with *a certain benign acknowledgment of the primitive right*. For if the original distributors of things were questioned, as to what they thought about this matter, they would reply what I have said. *Necessity*, says Father *SENECA*, *the great excuse for human weakness, breaks every law*; that is to say, *human law*, or law made after the manner of man.”

36. “But cautions ought to be had, for fear this license should be abused: of which the principal is, to try, in every way, whether the necessity can be avoided by any other means; for instance, by making application to the magistrate, or even by trying whether the use of the thing can, by entreaties, be obtained from the proprietor. *PLATO* permits water to be fetched from the well of a neighbour upon this condition alone, that the person asking for such permission shall dig in his own well in search of water as far as the chalk: and *SOLON*, that he shall dig in his own well as far as forty cubits. Upon which *PLUTARCH* adds, *that he judged that necessity was to be relieved, not laziness to be encouraged*.”

37. Such is the doctrine of this celebrated civilian. Let us now hear *PUFFENDORF*; and,

you will please to bear in mind, that both those writers are of the greatest authority upon all subjects connected with the laws of nature and of nations. We read in their works the result of an age of study: they have been two of the great guides of mankind ever since they wrote; and, we are not to throw them aside, in order to listen exclusively to *Parson HAY*, to *HULTON of HULTON*, or to *NICHOLAS GRIMSHAW*. They tell us what they, and what other wise men, deemed to be right; and, as we shall by-and-by see, the laws of England, so justly boasted of by our ancestors, hold precisely the same language with these celebrated men. After the following passage from *PUFFENDORF*, I shall show you what our own lawyers say upon the subject; but I request you to read the following passage with the greatest attention.

38. “Let us inquire, in the next place, whether the necessity of preserving our life can give us any right over other men’s goods, so as to make it allowable for us to seize on them for our relief, either secretly or by open force, against the owner’s consent. For the more clear and solid determination of which point, we think it necessary to hint in short on the cause upon which distinct *properties* were first introduced in the world; designing to examine them more at large in their proper place. Now the main reason on which *properties* are founded, we take to be these two; that the feuds and quarrels might be appeased which arose in the *primitive communion* of things, and that men might be put under a kind of necessity of being industrious, every one being to get his maintenance by his own application and labour. This division, therefore, of goods, was not made that every person should sit idly brooding over the share of wealth he had got, without assisting or serving his fellows; but that any one might dispose of his things how he pleased; and if he thought fit to communicate them to others, he might, at least, be thus furnished with an opportunity of laying obligations on the rest of mankind. Hence, when *properties* were once established, men obtained a power, not only of exercising commerce to their mutual advantage and gain, but likewise of dispensing more largely in the works of humanity and beneficence; whence their diligence had procured them a greater share of goods than others: whereas before, when all things lay in common, men could lend one another no assistance but what was supplied by their corporeal ability, and could be charitable of nothing but of their *strength*. Further, such is the force of *property*, that the *proprietor* hath a right of delivering his goods with his own hands; even such as he is obliged to give to others. Whence it follows, that when one man has anything owing from another, he is not presently to seize on it at a venture, but ought to apply himself to the owner, desiring to receive it from his disposal. Yet in case the

“other party refuse thus to make good his obligation, the power and privilege of *property* doth not reach so far as that the things may not be taken away without the owner's consent, either by the authority of the magistrate in *civil communities*, or in a *state of nature*, by violence and hostile force. And though in regard to bare natural right, for a man to relieve another in extremity when his goods, for which he himself hath not so much occasion, be a duty obliging only *imperfectly*, and not in the manner of a *debt*, since it arises wholly from the virtue of *humanity*; yet there seems to be no reason why, by the additional force of a civil ordinance, it may not be turned into a strict and perfect obligation. And this *Selden* observes to have been done among the *Jews*; who, upon a man's refusing to give such alms as were proper for him, *could force him to it by an action at law*. It is no wonder, therefore, that they should forbid *their poor*, on any account, to seize on the goods of others, enjoining them to take only what private persons, or the public officers, or stewards of alms, should give them on their petition. Whence the stealing of what was another's, though upon extreme necessity, passed in that state for theft or rapine. But now supposing under another government the like good provision is not made for persons in want, supposing likewise that the covetous temper of men of substance cannot be prevailed on to give relief, and that the needy creature is not able, either by his work or service, or by making sale of any thing that he possesses, to assist his present necessity, *must he, therefore, perish with famine? Or can any human institution bind me with such a force that, in case another man neglects his duty towards me, I must rather die, than recede a little from the ordinary and regular way of acting?* We conceive, therefore, that such a person doth *not contract the guilt of theft*, who happening, not through his own fault, to be in extreme want, either of necessary food, or of clothes to preserve him from the violence of the weather, and cannot obtain them from the voluntary gift of the rich, either by urgent entreaties, or by offering somewhat equivalent in price, or by engaging to work it out, shall either forcibly or privily relieve himself out of their abundance; especially if he do it with full intention to pay the value of them whenever his better fortune gives him ability. Some men deny that such a case of necessity as we speak of can possibly happen. But what if a man should wander in a foreign land, unknown, friendless, and in want, spoiled of all he had by shipwreck, or by robbers, or having lost by some casualty whatever he was worth in his own country; should none be found willing either to relieve his distress, or to hire his service, or should they rather (as it commonly happens), seeing him in a good garb, suspect him to beg

“without reason, must the poor creature starve in this miserable condition?”

39. Many other great foreign authorities might be referred to, and I cannot help mentioning *COVARRUVIUS*, who is spoken of by *JUDGE HALE*, and who expresses himself upon the subject in these words: “The reason why a man in extreme necessity, may, *without incurring the guilt of theft or rapine*, forcibly take the goods of others for his present relief, is, because his condition renders all things common. For it is the ordinance and institution of nature itself, that inferior things should be designed and directed to serve the necessities of men. Wherefore the division of goods afterwards introduced into the world doth not derogate from that precept of natural reason, which suggests, that the extreme wants of mankind may be in any manner removed by the use of temporal possessions.” *PUFFENDORF* tells us, that *PERESIVS* maintains, that in case of extreme necessity, a man is compelled to the action, by a force which he cannot resist; and then, that the owner's consent may be presumed on, because humanity obliges him to succour those who are in distress. The same writer cites a passage from *St. AMBROSE*, one of the *FATHERS* of the church, which alleges that (in case of refusing to give to persons in extreme necessity) it is the person who retains the goods that is guilty of the act of wrong doing, for *St. AMBROSE* says, “it is the bread of the hungry which you detain; it is the raiment of the naked which you lock up.”

40. Before I come to the English authorities on the same side, let me again notice the foul dealing of *Blackstone*; let me point out another instance or two of the insincerity of this English court sycophant, who was, let it be noted, solicitor-general to the queen of the “good old king.” You have seen, in paragraph 25, a most flagrant instance of his perversion of Scriptures. He garbles the of word God, and prefaces the garbling by calling it a thing “certified by King Solomon himself;” and this word *certified* he makes use of just when he is about to begin the scandalous falsification of the text which he is referring to. Never was anything more base. But, the whole extent of the baseness we have not yet seen; for *BLACKSTONE* had read *HALE*, who had quoted the two verses fairly; but besides this, he had read *PUFFENDORF*, who had noticed very fully this text of Scripture, and who had shown very clearly that it did not at all make in favour of the doctrine of *Blackstone*. *Blackstone* ought to have given the argument of *PUFFENDORF*; he ought to have given the whole of his argument; but particularly he ought to have given this explanation of the passage in the *PROVERBS*, which explanation I have inserted in paragraph 24. It was also the height of insincerity in *BLACKSTONE*,

to pretend that the passage from CICERO had anything at all to do with the matter. He knew well that it had not; he knew that CICERO contemplated no case of extreme necessity for want of food or clothing; but, he had read PUFFENDORF, and PUFFENDORF had told him, that CICERO's was a question of the mere *conveniences* and *inconveniences* of life in general; and not a question of pinching hunger or shivering nakedness. BLACKSTONE had seen his fallacy exposed by PUFFENDORF; he had seen the misapplication of this passage of CICERO fully exposed by PUFFENDORF; and yet the base court sycophant trumped it up again, without mentioning PUFFENDORF's exposure of the fallacy! In short this BLACKSTONE, upon this occasion, as upon almost all others, has gone all lengths; has set detection and reproof at defiance, for the sake of making his court to the government by inculcating harshness in the application of the law, and by giving to the law such an interpretation as would naturally tend to justify that harshness.

41. Let us now cast away from us this insincere sycophant, and turn to other law authorities of our own country. The *Mirroure of Justices* (quoted by me in paragraph 11), chap. 4, section 16, on the subject of arrest of judgment of death, has this passage. "Judgment is to be staid in seven cases here specified; and the seventh is this: in POVERTY, in which case you are to distinguish of the poverty of the offender, or of things; for if poor people, to avoid famine, take victuals to sustain their lives, or clothes that they die not of cold (so that they perish if they keep not themselves from cold), they are not to be adjudged to death, if it were not in their power to have bought their victuals or clothes; for as much as they are warranted so to do by the law of nature." Now, my friends, you will observe, that I take this from a book which may almost be called the BIBLE of the law. There is no lawyer who will deny the goodness of this authority; or who will attempt to say that this was not always the law of England.

42. Our next authority is one quite as authentic, and almost as ancient. The book goes by the name of BRITTON, which was the name of a Bishop of Hereford who edited it, in the famous reign of EDWARD THE FIRST. The book does, in fact, contain the laws of the kingdom as they existed at that time. It may be called the record of the laws of Edward the First. It begins thus, "Edward, by the grace of God, King of England and Lord of Ireland, to all his liege subjects, peace, and grace of salvation." The preamble goes on to state, that people cannot be happy without good laws; that even good laws are of no use unless they be known and understood; and that, therefore, the king has ordered the laws of England thus to be written and recorded. This book is very well known to be of the greatest au-

thority, among lawyers, and in Chap. 10 of this book, in which the law describes what constitutes a BURGLAR, or house-breaker, and the punishment that he shall suffer (which is that of death), there is this passage: "Those are to be deemed burglars who feloniously, in time of peace, break into churches or houses, or through walls or doors of our cities or our boroughs; with the exception of children under age, and of poor people who for hunger enter to take any sort of victuals of less value than twelve pence; and except idiots and mad people, and others that cannot commit felony." Thus, you see, this agrees with the *Mirroure of Justices*, and with all that we have read before from these numerous high authorities. But this, taken in its full latitude, goes a great length indeed; for a burglar is a *breaker-in by night*. So that this is not only a *taking*, but a *breaking into* a house in order to take! And observe, it is taking to the value of *twelve pence*; and twelve pence then was the price of a couple of sheep, and of fine fat sheep too; nay, twelve pence was the price of an ox, in this very reign of Edward the First. So that, a hungry man might have a pretty good belly-full in those days without running the risk of punishment. Observe, by-the-by, how time has hardened the law. We are told of the *dark ages*, of the *barbarous customs*, of our forefathers; and we have a SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH to receive and to present petitions innumerable, from the most tender-hearted creatures in the world, about "*softening the criminal code*;" but, not a word do they ever say about a softening of *this law*, which now hangs a man for stealing the value of a RABBIT, and which formerly did not hang him till he stole the value of an OX? Curious enough, but still more scandalous, that we should have the impudence to talk of our *humanity*, and our *civilization*, and of the barbarousness of our forefathers. But, if a part of the ancient law remain, shall not the whole of it remain? If we hang the thief, still hang the thief for stealing to the value of *twelve pence*; though the twelve pence now represent a rabbit instead of an ox; if we still do this, would BLACKSTONE take away the benefit of the ancient law from the starving man? The passage that I have quoted is of such great importance as to this question, that I think it necessary to add, here, a copy of the original, which is in the old *Norman-French*, of which I have given the translation above. "Sunt tenns burgessours trestons ceux, que felonisement en temps de pees debrusent esglises ou auter mesons, ou murs, ou portes de nos cytes, ou de nos burghes; hors pris en sauntz dedans age, et poures, que, pur feyn, entrèt pur ascun vitaille de meindre value q' de xii deners, et hors pris sous nastres, et gens arrages, et autres que seuent nule felonie faire."

43. After this, *lawyers*, at any rate, will not attempt to gainsay. If there should, however, remain any one to affect to doubt of the soundness of this doctrine, let them take the following from him who is always called the "*pride of philosophy*" the "*pride of English learning*," and whom the Poet Pope calls the "*greatest and wisest of mankind*." It is Lord Bacon of whom I am speaking. He was Lord High Chancellor in the reign of James I.; and, let it be observed, that he wrote those "*Law Tracts*," from which I am about to quote, long after the present poor-laws had been established. He says (*Law Tracts*, p. 55) "The law chargeth no man with default where the act is compulsory and not voluntary, and where there is not consent and election; and, therefore, if either there be an impossibility for a man to do otherwise, or so great a perturbation of the judgment and reason, as in presumption of law man's nature cannot overcome, such necessity carrieth a privilege in itself. Necessity is of three sorts: necessity of conversation of life; necessity of obedience; and necessity of the act of God or of a stranger. First, of conversation of life; if a man steals viands (*victuals*) to satisfy his present hunger, this is no felony nor larceny."

44. If any man want more authority, his heart must be hard indeed; he must have an uncommonly anxious desire to take away by the halter the life that sought to preserve itself against hunger. But, after all, what need had we of any authorities? What need had we even of reason upon the subject? Who is there upon the face of the earth, except the monsters that come from across the channel of St. George; who is there upon the face of the earth, except those monsters, that have the brass, the hard hearts and the brazen faces, which enable them coolly to talk of the "*MERIT*" of the degraded creatures, who, amidst an abundance of food, amidst a "*superabundance of food*," lie quietly down and receive the extreme unction, and expire with hunger! Who, upon the face of the whole earth, except these monsters, these ruffians by way of excellence; who, except these, the most insolent and hard-hearted ruffians that ever lived, will contend, or will dare to think, that there ought to be any force under heaven to compel a man to lie down at the door of a baker's and butcher's shop, and expire with hunger! The very nature of man makes him shudder at the thought. There want no authorities; no appeal to law books; no arguments; no questions of right or wrong: that same human nature that tells me that I am not to cut my neighbour's throat, and drink his blood, tells me that I am not to make him die at my feet by keeping from him food or raiment of which I have more than I want for my own preservation.

45. Talk of barbarians, indeed; talk of "*the dark and barbarous ages*." Why, even

in the days of the DRUIDS, such barbarity as that of putting men to death, or of punishing them for taking to relieve their hunger, was never thought of. In the year 1811, the Rev. PETER ROBERTS, A. M., published a book, entitled *Collectanea Cambrica*. In the first volume of that book, there is an account of the laws of the ANCIENT BRITONS. Hume, and other Scotchmen, would make us believe, that the ancient inhabitants of this country were a set of savages, clothed in skins and the like. The laws of this people were collected and put into writing, in the year 694 before Christ. The following extract from these laws shows, that the moment civil society began to exist, that moment the law took care that people should not be starved to death. That moment it took care, that provision should be made for the destitute, or that, in cases of extreme necessity, men were to preserve themselves from death by taking from those who had to spare. The words of these laws (as applicable to our case) given by Mr. ROBERTS, are as follows:—"There are three distinct kinds of personal individual property, which cannot be shared with another, or surrendered in payment of fine; viz.—a wife, a child, and argyfrew. By the word *argyfrew* is meant, clothes, arms, or the implements of a lawful calling. For without these a man has not the means of support, and it would be unjust in the law to unman a man, or to uncall a man as to his calling." TRIAD 53.—"Three kinds of THIEVES are not to be punished with DEATH. 1. A wife, who joins with her husband in the theft. 2. A youth under age. And 3. One who, after he has asked, in vain, for support, in three towns, and at nine houses in each town." TRIAD 137.

46. There were, then, *houses and towns*, it seems; and the towns were pretty thickly spread too; and, as to "*civilization*" and "*refinement*" let this law relative to a youth under age be compared with the new orchard and garden law, and with the tread mill affair and new trespass law.

47. We have a law, called the VAGRANT ACT, to punish men for begging. We have a law to punish men for not working to keep their families. Now, with what show of justice can these laws be maintained? They are founded upon this: the first, that begging is disgraceful to the country; that it is degrading to the character of man, and, of course, to the character of an Englishman; and, that there is no necessity for begging, because the law has made ample provision for every person in distress. The law for punishing men for not working to maintain their families is founded on this, that they are doing wrong to their neighbours; their neighbours, that is to say, the parish, being bound to keep the family, if they be not kept by the man's labour; and, therefore, his not labouring is a wrong done to the parish. The same may be said with regard to the punishment for not

maintaining bastard children. There is good reason for these laws, as long as the poor-laws are duly executed; as long as the poor are duly relieved according to law; but, unless the poor-laws exist; unless they be in full force; unless they be duly executed; unless efficient and prompt relief be given to necessitous persons, these acts, and many others approaching to a similar description, are acts, the character of which it is not necessary to describe.

48. The law of this country is, that every man, able to carry arms, is liable to be called on, to serve in the militia, or to serve as a soldier in some way or other, *in order to defend the country*. What, then, the man has *no land*; he has *no property* beyond his mere body, and clothes, and tools; he has nothing that an enemy can take away from him. What *justice* is there, then, in calling upon this man to take up arms and *risk his life* in the defence of the land: what is the land to him? I say, that it is something to him; I say, that he ought to be called forth to assist to defend the land; because, however poor he may be, *he has a share in the land*, through the poor-rates; and if he be liable to be called forth to defend the land, *the land is always liable to be taxed for his support*. This is what I say: my opinions are consistent with reason, with justice, and with the law of the land; but, how can MALTHUS and his silly and *nasty* disciples; how can those who want to abolish the poor-rates or to prevent the poor from marrying; how can this at once stupid and conceited tribe look the labouring man in the face, while they call upon him to take up arms, to risk his life, in defence of the land? Grant that the poor-laws are just; grant that every necessitous creature has a right to demand relief from some parish or other; grant that the law has most effectually provided that every man shall be protected against the effects of hunger and of cold; grant these, and then the law which compels the man without house or land to take up arms and risk his life in defence of the country, is a perfectly just law: but deny to the necessitous that legal and certain relief of which I have been speaking; abolish the poor-laws; and then this military service law becomes an act of a character such as I defy any pen or tongue to define. What! *hang* a man, if he refuse to take up arms to defend the land of his birth; and tell him, at the same time, that he has *no right to be upon, and to have a living out of, that land*! Yet, this is what he is, in fact, told by those who deny his *right*, in case of need, to receive the means of sustaining life. This is such a daring insult to common sense; such a savage outrage on all the natural feelings of the human breast, that, whenever attempted to be acted upon, it must, in the end, produce the overthrow of the tyrant, or tyrants, who shall make the attempt.

WM. COBBETT.

THE following is the letter to which I have alluded before. I received it from Manchester the day before yesterday; and the reader may rely upon the correctness of his statements. The writer is a rich man; a man by no means influenced by political heats and animosities; full as "respectable and intelligent" as any of the heroes of Dr. BLACK. With the insertion of this letter, I shall have done justice as far as I am able to the town of Manchester, towards which town I entertain feelings of great respect and gratitude; and having done it this justice, I shall leave POULETT THOMSON and his bunch of PRIGS, to creep about the world in that obscurity to which they are destined by reason as well as by nature.

TO MR. COBBETT.

Manchester, 28. Dec. 1832.

SIR,—The following was intended to have been sent to Mr. Thomson, but was unavoidably deferred till too late; as perhaps you would like to know how the meeting was got up, and how it ended, I have taken the liberty of sending it to you. Excuse my presumption in doing so, and I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

TO THE RT. HON. C. P. THOMSON.

SIR,—Allow me to express my chagrin, not only for the manner in which you were received by the public on Monday last, but also for the manner in which you have been treated by those individuals who undertook to carry your election. I do not here mean to impugn the motives which induced those individuals to propose you as a candidate for this borough, or yours, in either not explicitly publishing your principles, views, and intentions, when so proposed, or in not coming forward personally and doing so, far less do I intend to dip my pen in their ink, imitate their scurrility, and abuse you for having acceded to their request *in now coming forward* to fulfil the pledge they had given to the public, that you

would substantiate everything they had affirmed concerning your principles. My intention alone in addressing you at this time, is *to expose the underhand and surreptitious manner* in which you were dragged before the meeting last Monday (and, as I *understand, against your will*), and why you were received so uncourteously by the public, as also the insolent manner in which they have treated the public. I have taken every means to ascertain the truth, and did I not believe the following to be a fair statement of facts, and the conclusion deduced from these facts to be correct, I would not have intruded upon your notice.

It had been represented to you by the deputation, that you were called upon by a *very large majority of the constituency* (I use your own words), that the public were unanimous in your favour, and that at the meeting alluded to, you would be received in the most flattering manner. That everything would appear as had thus been represented to you, these individuals used every artifice which persons who are perfect in the art of deception well know how to employ. You will please to bear in mind, that you were to have addressed *the public* (so ran the pledge), and in that address you were *to have confirmed all* which these individuals had said concerning your principles. It was to have been a public meeting; that is to say, the doors of the room were to be opened at a certain time, which time was to have been half-past twelve; and at that hour the room was to be taken possession of by the public; that is to say, that those who voted for you, those who voted against you, those who had no vote at all, and those who were indifferent whether you were elected or not, were to take possession of the room *at that hour*, to hear you fulfil the pledge which those individuals, &c.; and, according to custom, ask you such questions as they might think would better elucidate your principles. Let us now see if such were the case. If the meeting was such as one would naturally expect from the oft-repeated pledges, that is to

say, if it really was an open meeting, and if it was composed of what is called the public,—I say No; and after you have read what follows, you will say No also.

These individuals caused a vast number of election cards to be procured, on which one of the clique wrote his initials. But what could be the use of all that vast number of tickets you exclaim, when it was told you it was to be a public meeting; you must bear in mind that the meeting was to be unanimous in your favour, and how could that be gained, if your opponents were to be admitted; but you were told it was to be a public meeting after a very few of your friends had obtained favourable seats, therefore few tickets would be required you say. So one would think; but the very opposite was the case. These vast numbers of cards were divided into two parts, one of which was given to Mr. Phillips's committee, and the other to your own, for distribution, that *those only who were favourable to you might obtain admission*. It was also intended that the number of these should have been such as to completely fill the room before the doors were opened to the public, so that when you arrived everything might have the appearance as had been represented to you, and as if the public had been admitted in the usual way; if it was so, you can well-judge, but you seemed by what you said, to have been disappointed; but mark ye, I do not intend to implicate all your committee in this low artifice, it entirely rests with a few. It was intended that the public should be excluded; but, alas, how often are the best-concerted schemes rendered abortive, from circumstances over which even the most cunning and far-sighted have no control! Several individuals opposed to you in politics, and well known to be so, called or sent to your committee-room for tickets of admission, *but were refused*; thus being made aware of the manner in which the meeting was to be got up, they were determined to frustrate it. Soon after a placard appeared on the walls, informing the public that the doors would be

open at twelve o'clock. This, however, did not suit the views of your committee, who soon after posted up, in front of the Exchange, a placard, informing *the public* that it was not your intention of addressing them *until Thursday*. Mark the equivocation and dissimulation. But the public were not to be so deceived; the motives of the clique were now completely unveiled, and the public were now determined to gain admittance, if possible, before the *meeting was packed*; they therefore became very vociferous in their calls that the doors should be opened, but they were of no avail. And here let me tell you, whatever your committees *may say to the contrary*, that it was *not the rabble* who did so, but a mixture of all classes; however, they need not have been so impatient, as we shall see by-and-by. At half-past twelve o'clock the door by which a few of your friends were to be admitted, that they might accommodate themselves more advantageously for hearing, was now thrown open, when the rush of both the privileged and unprivileged became tremendous; it is indeed past description; but so determined were those of your committee who had now got inside, that none but those who were favourable to you should be admitted; even although by doing so, endangered the lives of dozens, they would only allow one at a time to enter; and it was evident they had succeeded pretty well, for in about half an hour the room was three-quarters filled with such, about 50 excepted, who either had been able to procure tickets, or had passed in the crowd. The time of your appearance now approached, the room was not full, what now was to be done, your friends seemed quite at a loss—the *public* without ignorant that there was so much spare room, kept thundering at the other door, whilst the few who had got inside, as it were by a miracle, kept calling out for the keys to open it; but that would never do, as the clique were loath, after all their placarding, manœuvring, abusing of others, and pledging,—that the plot should be spoiled just in the mo-

ment of fruition: at length you yourself arrived and became a witness of what passed afterwards; and if after you have read and judged, *and are not* disgusted, I will only say—no, I will not say what I would think of you, I will let you judge of that. We now approach the denouement. It must surely have been intended that the doors should be open *for the public* before you came to meet them; what did you think when you perceived them as fast as bolts and bars could make them—when you were made aware of the fact by the repeated calls for the keys from those inside, and the thunderings of those outside the door—when you saw Dyer, who for the first was made aware of the disagreeable situation in which *he* was now placed with regard to yourself, by such an oversight of the underlings to whose care had been committed the management of packing the meeting, and who seemed to hug themselves in the idea that they had managed excellently well in keeping out your opponents? But they overshot the mark, and became Marplots. You ought to *excuse them*; it was well intended on their part, although I doubt not they have been by this time heartily taken to task by those pots of precious ointment, Dyer and Co. What did you think, I ask you, when you saw Dyer dancing about the platform like a hen on a hot gridiron, shifting first from one foot, and then to the other, asking for the keys from all around him, pushing his hand first into one pocket and then into the other, till his fidgiting was at last put an end to by one of the underlings or Marplots, pulling them from his breeches pocket, just as a miser would his purse to a highway robber? At length, in about ten minutes from the time you entered the doors were opened, and in rushed the indignant *public*,—and good cause had they to be so from the manner they have been treated from first to last. In your address, or rather your apology for not addressing them, you said (as near as I could hear from the astounding noise), “*you did not expect*” “to meet such an assembly as that before you; that you had been led to ex-

"pect you had been called upon by a *very* "*large majority*" of the constituency." Neither was it the intention of *the clique* that you should be so received. From what passed before your own eyes and from what has now been related to you, you will perceive how you have been cajoled by these fellows, and in what manner they have treated the public; therefore, do not impute the uproar to any other cause, you could not but perceive it was principally directed against Dyer, and that so very obnoxious was he, that the exertions of his supporters were of no avail; that they were only like red cinders dropt into the ocean, or the hootings of a parcel of screech-owls in the midst of a hurricane. You must further perceive, that the meeting was intended only to consist of those whom the clique thought proper, when you are told that Dyer actually came forward and said, "that as the object of the meeting was now accomplished, it was now dissolved." And that from these words and the whole of his proceedings, it is evident he considered he had now fulfilled his pledge to the *people of Manchester*; and that he never intended you should be cross-questioned as the other candidates were. But I trust you will yet unshackle yourself; stand forth as a freeman ought to do, and *give them an opportunity of hearing* from your own lips what are your real principles and intentions, and throw from you that coat of darkness with which you have been taunted as having enwrapped yourself.

I am, Sir,

On the 1. of February will appear the first Number of COBBETT'S MAGAZINE: A MONTHLY REVIEW of Politics, History, Science, Literature, Fine Arts, Mechanics, and rural and domestic Pursuits. Edited by JOHN and JAMES COBBETT. Price 2s.

MR. COBBETT'S ANSWER to the WHIG-MANIFESTO (promulgated by Mr. STANLEY at LANCASTER), against such members of the new Parliament as shall propose *a repeal of the Septennial Bill*, or as shall propose the adoption of *the Ballot*, will be published at Bolt-court, on *Thursday*, the 10. of January, *price threepence*; and, that it may be circulated widely, at 3s. 4d. for 20 copies, and at 12s. 6d. for 100 copies. It will contain as much print as is usually contained in a two-shilling pamphlet.

COBBETT'S TOUR IN SCOTLAND, including the four Northern Counties of England, will be published on *Thursday*, the 10. of January, in a neat volume, *price 2s. 6d.*, bound in boards.

From the LONDON GAZETTE,

FRIDAY, DEC. 28, 1832.

BANKRUPTCIES ANNULLED.

DITCHFIELD, J., Warrington, Lancashire, victualler.
REIFFENSTEIN, J. C., Langport-place, Camberwell, and Quebec, L. C., merchant.

BANKRUPTS.

ARMSTRONG, W., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, timber-merchant.
BUTLER, W., Bilston, Staffordshire, miller.
GRAVES, G., Skimburness, Cumberland, innkeeper.
JACKSON, J., Bedford-row, tailor.
LADD, W. H., Liverpool-street, merchant.
LEVY, S., Exeter, silversmith.
LOADER, T. B., Hart-street, Bloomsbury, map-publisher.
PERRY, T., Knightsbridge, licensed victualler.
WHITE, W., Great-bridge, Staffordshire, grocer.

SCOTCH SEQUESTRATION.

STEEL, J., Glasgow, agent.

TUESDAY, JAN. 1, 1833.

INSOLVENT.

WINBOLT, B. J., Poultry, stationer.

BANKRUPTS.

ATHOW, C. T., Wood-street, Cheapside,
wholesale haberdasher.

FRITH, T., High Holborn, ironmonger.

HOWARD, C., Mile-end-road, victualler.

IRVINE, J., Brunswick-street, Russell-sq.,
master-mariner.

MADDOCKS, P., Liverpool, timber merchant.

WEAVER, T., South-street, Spitalfields,
cheesemonger.

WORLEY, I. jun., Bow-lane, tailor.

SCOTCH SEQUESTRATIONS.

HOOME, W., and J. Maxwell, Glasgow, ma-
nufacturers.

M'KINLAY, P., Kirkcaldy, merchant.

LONDON MARKETS.

MARK-LANE, CORN-EXCHANGE, Dec. 31.—
The supplies of wheat fresh up to this morn-
ing's market were moderate. The principal
portion was from Kent; less than usual from
Essex; and trifling from Suffolk. The quality
was generally not fine, and the condition af-
fected by the weather. We had a thin at-
tendance of buyers, and the transactions ex-
tremely limited. Wheat moved heavily off
hand at the prices nominally of last week,
though, if extensive purchases had been made,
they might have been effected on lower terms.
We heard of no business transpiring in bonded
wheat. Kubanka was still held at 30s. to 32s.

The accounts from the leading country
markets received this morning, with the ex-
ception of Newcastle, state the wheat trade
as firm at the former currencies, particularly
the best qualities.

The arrivals of barley have been rather
considerable. Best malting qualities realised
the quotations of last week; but middling
and inferior descriptions were 1s. per qr.
cheaper, with a dull sale.

The supply of Scotch oats was good, but of
English and Irish limited; the latter quali-
ties were very dull sale, and Friday's rates
barely maintained; but Scotch experienced
rather a fair demand at former quotations.

Old beans maintained their prices, but new
were 1s. per qr. lower.

Peas steady, with a moderate demand.

Flour remained without alteration.

Wheat	58s. to 60s.
Rye	32s. to 33s.
Barley	26s. to 28s.
— fine	36s. to 38s.

Peas, White	38s. to 40s.
— Boilers	42s. to 43s.
— Grey	36s. to 38s.
Beans, Small	35s. to 40s.
— Tick	33s. to 35s.
Oats, Potato	21s. to 22s.
— Feed	18s. to 21s.
Flour, per sack	50s. to 55s.

PROVISIONS.

Bacon, Middles, new, 45s. to 46s. per cwt.	
— Sides, new ... 44s. to 48s.	
Pork, India, new ... 127s. 0d. to —s.	
— Mess, new ... 80s. 0d. to —s. per barl.	
Butter, Belfast ... 84s. to —s. per cwt.	
— Carlow ... 82s. to 88s.	
— Cork ... 80s. to 82s.	
— Limerick ... 80s. to 82s.	
— Waterford ... 78s. to 80s.	
— Dublin ... 76s. to 78s.	
Cheese, Cheshire ... 50s. to 78s.	
— Gloucester, Double ... 46s. to 60s.	
— Gloucester, Single ... 44s. to 50s.	
— Edam ... 48s. to 50s.	
— Gouda ... 48s. to 50s.	
Hams, Irish ... 55s. to 66s.	

SMITHFIELD.—Dec. 31.

In this day's market, which was throughout
but indifferently supplied, both as to numbers
and quality, prime beef, prime mutton, and
prime veal, met with a brisk sale, at an ad-
vance of from 4d. to 6d. Beef, mutton, and
veal, of middling and inferior quality, 2d. to
4d. per stone. Pork was in steady demand,
at Friday's prices.

The beasts, a considerable number of the
smaller kinds of which appeared to be the
refuse of the whole year, consisted of about
equal numbers of short-horns, and Devonshire
(chiefly) steers and oxen, Welsh runts, and
Irish beasts, for the most part from our north-
ern and western districts, with perhaps 200
Town's-end cows; a few Herefords, Sussex
beasts, Scots, Norfolk home-breds, Staffords,
&c., from various quarters.

Full four-fifths of the sheep were new
Leicesters of the South Down and different
white-faced crosses, in the proportion of about
two of the former to three of the latter; about
a tenth South Downs; and the remainder
about equal numbers of Kents, Kentish half-
breds, and old Leicesters, with a few horned
and polled Norfolks, horned and polled Scotch
and Welsh sheep, horned Dorsets, &c.

Beasts, 2,064; sheep, 14,840; calves, 156;
pigs, 80.

MARK-LANE.—Friday, Jan. 4.

The arrivals this week good. The market
dull, with rather lower prices than on Mon-
day.

THE FUNDS.

3 per Cent. Cons. Ann., shut.

COBBETT-LIBRARY.

*New Edition.***COBBETT'S Spelling-Book***(Price 2s.)*

Containing, besides all the usual matter of such a book, a clear and concise

INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

This I have written by way of

A Stepping-Stone to my own Grammar;

such a thing having been frequently suggested to me by Teachers as necessary.

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4. THE EMIGRANT'S GUIDE. Just now Published, under this Title, a little Volume, containing Ten Letters, addressed to English Tax-payers. A new edition, with a Postscript, containing an account of the Prices of Houses and Land, recently obtained from America by Mr. Cobbett. Price 2s. 6d. in bds.

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